CREATIVE PREACHING

EDITED BY

G. BROMLEY OXNAM

LECTURES BY

Bishop William F. McDowell and Drs. James Moffatt, Ralph W. Sockman, Gaius Glenn Atkins, Joseph M. M. Gray, J. Edgar Park, Douglas Horton, Daniel L. Marsh, Daniel A. Poling, Charles R. Brown, John W. Langdale, Garfield Morgan, Oscar T. Olson, William P. Merrill, William L. Stidger, Lucius H. Bugbee, Edgar DeW. Jones, and G. Bromley Oxnam

At the Conference on Preaching at which these lectures were delivered men of many gifts and graces were present, not as representatives of their respective ecclesiastical bodies, but rather as ambassadors of Christ and teachers of the mysteries of God. They were men of preaching skill who gave of their rich experience in order that students "studying their personalities, methods, and messages might become better preachers of the unsearchable riches of Christ." In the beginning of his lecture on "The Mystery of Preaching," Professor Moffatt makes the observation that "about some kinds of preaching there is no mystery whatsoever except the mystery of understanding why they should be tolerated in a Christian church." If the improvement of modern-day preaching is dependent in any degree upon preaching by example the young preachers who had the opportunity to hear this course of lectures should be greatly profited personally, and the people whom they serve should be spiritually edified.

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Creative Preaching

A Series of Lectures Delivered before the
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Edited by
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TO THE

MEN OF THE CLASS OF 1930

IN THE

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION G. Bromley Oxnam	7
I.	THE MYSTERY OF PREACHING James Moffatt	15
II.	THE PREACHER AS MORALIST Ralph W. Sockman	30
III.	THE PREACHER AS INTERPRETER Gaius Glenn Atkins	52
IV.	THE PREACHER AND THE PROPHETIC TRADITION Joseph M. M. Gray	73
V.	THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE MINISTER J. Edgar Park	93
VI.	THE PERSONAL FOUNDATION William Fraser McDowell	116
VII.	THE PARADOX OF PREACHING Douglas Horton	134
VIII.	THE ART OF PREACHING Daniel L. Marsh	156
IX.	THE PREACHER: HIS PASSION AND PLAN Daniel A. Poling	169
X.	THE ESSENTIAL METHOD OF PREACHING Charles R. Brown	185

CONTENTS

PAGE

XI. The Ministry—Its Difficulties and Compensations 204
John W. Langdale

XII. "Christ—The Lord of His Event" 219
Garfield Morgan

XIII. The Pulpit and the Pew 229
Oscar Thomas Olson

XIV. New Lamps for Old 247
William Pierson Merrill

XV. When Preaching Has Wings 262
William L. Stidger

XVI. Preaching and Poetry 287
Lucius H. Bugbee

XVII. Great Books and Great Preaching 296
Edgar DeWitt Jones

XVIII. The Playwright as Preacher 322
G. Bromley Oxnam

INTRODUCTION

"THE intercreating mind" is a term coined by Professor H. A. Overstreet. The Professor leads us to an understanding of this phrase by referring first of all to that type of "expansive" individual who unites himself in the profoundest kind of understanding with *something* or *someone* other than himself. For instance, there is the typical scientist, who is described as divesting himself as far as possible of his personal equation so that the object studied tells the scientist what *it* has to tell. "Thus what the scientist generates comes not simply out of himself but out of the joint relation between himself and his object."[1]

Professor Overstreet deals likewise with the typical scholar, who seeks to unite himself with something in the book he is studying that is vitally significant. "Thus he too when he produces, produces not out of himself alone, but out of the joint relationship between himself and those envolumed friends."

There is also a third type, and it is in describing this type that we find the term "the intercreating mind." "It is the person who seeks to unite with other living minds. I am not referring to that ordinary kind of person who seeks union for the sake of personal comfort, for a chance to pour himself out, for the pleasure of a passing

[1] *About Ourselves.* Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., publishers, New York.

converse, or placidly to absorb. The person I am now describing is different. He seeks union on the basis of understanding. He goes out to the other mind—sincerely, searchingly—tries so to comprehend it that the two, in a sense, become one. As a consequence, something significant happens. He comes back to himself in a measure changed. For out of that contact with the other mind something new has been brought to birth. If the second mind is of like nature, if it too seeks to unite, then the most fruitful of all human relationships is entered into. Each stimulates the other to response; each helps to bring to birth ideas and interests that would doubtless never have been born in either singly. There takes place, in short, what might be called an intercreating process."

The preacher who is fortunate enough to possess opportunity for scientific research in the laboratory, or who possesses the advantage of a rich library, may out of the union with the object of his scientific study or union with the ideas of his "envolumed friends" become a more effective preacher. But it would appear that his mind might become more stimulated for creative preaching if he engage in the intercreative process described by Professor Overstreet.

Is it not possible for the preacher, in his hours of personal devotion, to stand in the very presence of the mind of God? Is it too much to hope that an interplay of thought between the mind of

God and the mind of the preacher may result when the preacher finds himself in the presence of God? Did not this happen in the case of the prophets of yesterday? Does the term "revelation" mean less than this, or, for that matter, more? Is it too much to expect that through such communion the mind of the preacher may receive such stimulation that he in turn becomes better equipped for creative preaching?

However, it must be seen at once that it is not alone the intercreative communion of preacher with God, which may take place in the stillness of the chapel or the silence of the study, upon which the preacher must rely for his total stimulus. Similar stimulation will be found in his personal contact with human beings of every walk of life. The intercreative relationship must include communion with little children, with toiling men and women, with rich and poor, with downtrodden and mighty, with the strong and the broken. The preacher who possesses the intercreating mind, and who receives the stimulation of union with the mind of God and the mind of men, finds his own mind ever growing, and he in turn more and more qualified for creative preaching.

But someone will raise the question at once, What is it you seek to create? I take it that the supreme objective in Christian preaching is to create new life; that is, life like the life that was in Christ Jesus. He who creates that new life is

preaching creatively. Is not such creativity the primary need of present-day society? Were not the sources of Jesus' creative preaching the result of the intercreative process that went on when his mind was at one with the mind of his Father, and, likewise, when his mind was attuned to that of his fellows? Whatever the source of creative preaching in the life of Jesus may have been, certain it is that his preaching eventuated in newness of life. Is it presumptuous to think that the preacher may become a cocreator with God and that, as a result of his activity, the doctrine of the new birth may become a demonstrated fact as seen in the newness of life of thousands who listen to the creative preacher?

On October 15, 16, and 17, 1928, the first annual Conference on Preaching was held at the Boston University School of Theology. The lectures given there by distinguished preachers were published in the volume entitled *Effective Preaching*. On October 14, 15, and 16, 1929, the second Conference was held. The principle that governed the first ruled the second, namely, that men who have been effective in bringing newness of life to their congregations must possess the secret of effective and creative preaching. It was believed that these men might be able to reveal that secret to the students if they appeared in person and frankly strove to think with the students and to share experiences to the end that the secret might be found. The value of the Conference was

revealed in the fact that, in addition to the students, several hundred clergymen in the vicinity of Boston attended the Conference sessions. Naturally, the printed word lacks the strange something that, after all, is often the dominant factor in effective and creative preaching. For want of a better name, we use the term "personality." Nevertheless, a careful study of the lectures themselves may reveal worthwhile suggestions for all those who think in terms of creating new life.

The editor of this volume desires to thank each of the lecturers who made such generous contributions in time and thought to the Conference, and particularly to express his appreciation to President Daniel L. Marsh, of Boston University; Dean Albert C. Knudson, of the School of Theology; and Professor William L. Stidger, head of the Department of Homiletics, for the privilege of being associated in a small way with this significant Conference.

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SCHOOL OF THEOL

I

THE MYSTERY OF PREACHING

JAMES MOFFATT

ABOUT some kinds of preaching there is no mystery whatsoever, except the mystery of understanding why they should be tolerated in a Christian Church. There are men standing where they ought not, who talk casually and cheerfully on Sundays in a semi-journalistic tone, discussing anything that has recently occurred in the neighborhood or in the world at large, and apparently satisfied if they can entertain an audience with comments on the passing show. Others, it would seem, enter the pulpit in order to give lectures on current politics or economics or literature or even philosophy, the Christian religion being for them little more than a convenient point of departure. There are others—but why go on to enumerate their tribe? They are amusing even when they do not intend to be amusing, but to the thoughtful Christian they are a sad strange spectacle with their absorbing interest in the surface and the circumference of things. The one thing that puzzles us, in these weekly displays to a mixed audience, is their irrelevance to the central task of the Christian Church. Let us pass them by with a smile or a sigh.

But even within the ranks of preachers who are in closer touch with the vital concerns of worship there are some whose efforts are an undesirable mystery. They have failed to appreciate either the end or the methods of their high vocation. For example, in October, 1765, when Doctor Johnson went to church in London, he jotted down in his diary some pious resolves, two of which are significant. The first is "To come in before service and compose my mind by meditation or by reading some portions of Scripture." If all worshipers acted on this resolve there would be a congregation in which the preacher could preach profitably; as I shall point out in a moment, one condition for effective preaching lies in the atmosphere of the congregation, and people who come in the spirit of Doctor Johnson form a real congregation, not an audience who merely gather as one form of community-life or with the desire to pass a pleasant Sunday hour. It is the second resolve, however, which concerns us here. "I resolve," said Johnson, "if I can hear the sermon to attend it [that is, to attend to it], unless the attention be more troublesome than useful." Now, why should such a comment be needful? For it is not out of date in this present century. Some of our hearers still fail to hear us; or, if they do, they find us slovenly, uninteresting, and tiresome. Is there any reason why a congregation should have cause to wonder what a man is saying from the pulpit, or to wonder why he should

say what he is saying, in so disjointed or dull a fashion? Yet, as we all know, this sort of wonder is still roused in the minds of many, who with the best intentions find it sometimes more troublesome than profitable to pay attention to a preacher. Take a case which occurred also in London exactly a century before Doctor Johnson. In the year 1665 another distinguished layman, John Evelyn, a scientific and devout country gentleman, tells us in his diary how he heard a canon of Christ Church, Doctor Fell, preach before King Charles the Second "a very formal discourse, and in blank verse, according to his manner; however," the kindly Evelyn adds, "however, he is a good man." Perhaps, but not good at his job. No such allowances ought to be required when a man is preaching. Evelyn's wonder evidently was why so good a man should preach in this affected fashion.

But what I mean by the mystery of preaching is a different thing altogether; it is the quality which marks off genuine preaching of the Christian faith from so much well-meant talk that resembles it from week to week in many of our churches. There is a moving power in real preaching which is incalculable but none the less evident. The longer one preaches or listens to preaching, the more, I confess, this is borne in upon one's mind. No doubt, the conveyance of truth or conviction through speech is always a sort of mystery; oratory in any line of life effects something which is

not to be explained entirely by voice or style or subject; the impression made upon an audience at certain points of a speech is something to be felt rather than to be analyzed. In the last report it eludes explanation. Indeed, the effect is produced sometimes by men of no great voice and through words apparently commonplace, but there is no denying the effect upon the audience, the kindling of imagination, the quickening of conscience, the swaying of the mind as by a breeze over a wheatfield, till some idea becomes a new power through words spoken by one man to many. Now, preaching is or ought to be a mystery not only in this sense, though such gifts of kindling personality are not to be despised, but because the Christian religion is itself a mystery. Clearly as it may be taught and understood, patiently as it ought to be explained and interpreted, the faith runs out into a constant sphere of mystery, and the pervading sense of this ought to be present in true preaching. No one more than the preacher should be conscious that he is dealing with what ultimately lies beyond his best thought and grasp, that he is sent by God with a message for which words are at best an inadequate medium, a message which belongs to powers of the unseen world that are in the last resort beyond our highest reason. Of much that comes within his experience he can indeed speak sensibly and effectively. It is his duty to convey so much of the truth as he pos-

sesses. That is his reasonable service. And yet behind him, if he be preaching truly, he will be sensible and will make people sensible, that there is a greater Reality than can be grasped. In preaching one is not only moving people to think about God, but to think about God in the presence of God. Some of you will recollect how Shelley begins his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty":

> "The awful shadow of some unseen Power
> Floats tho' unseen amongst us—visiting
> This various world. . . .
> Like hues and harmonies of evening—
> Like clouds in starlight widely spread—
> Like memory of music fled—
> Like aught that for its grace may be
> Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery."

Christianity is like that, "dear and yet dearer for its mystery." It is God visiting his people, and that means awe as well as intelligence. Unless it is taught, it becomes a superstition; unless it can be interpreted and appreciated by the mind, it degenerates into a vague sentiment which fails to move this various world of ours. But it is not a rational system or a logical program, a mere subject for argument and disputation, as though these could produce belief by a spontaneous generation. And the difficulty of reconciling these two aspects of reason and reverence comes to a head in preaching, where the truth has to be presented as a revelation, an open secret of God, and yet with the constant

suggestion that this revelation passes our understanding.

In the best preaching, therefore, in true preaching there is generally a lyric note, for its aim, like that of poetry, is not to prove so much as to inspire and to suggest. Like all great truths, this can be easily caricatured. A preacher does not convey it to his congregation by adopting an affected tone of utterance or any pietistic language. These are worse than useless. He must be natural if he is to be effective. Neither is it possible to convey the impression if he simply asks a congregation to believe in certain dogmas which elude explanation or by repeating doctrinal statements to be accepted as such. To fall back on such devices is to confess that he has failed in his true task, because he has failed to understand the genius of the religion he is serving. At the root of our religion, as, indeed, of any real religion, lies the conviction that we have to do with a divine Life, not with a philosophical theory or an idea, though the Life may and must elicit ideas and theories. We have to do with God, who is living and active, who has manifested himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, and whose thoughts are yet not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. It is our task to understand and obey his purpose as best we can, and yet the more we do so, the more we are conscious how little we can enter into the full meaning of his revelation, even with all our inherited conceptions and

our growing experience. The sense of this Reality which we have not made is at the heart of all we say and think and do as Christians. And, I hold, it is only in the consciousness of this that the preacher can do his effective service. There must be an underlying sense of the Life which is common to himself and his congregation, even although he may not dwell upon the thought. Only so can he avoid a smiling glib self-confidence and, on the other hand, a helpless, unworthy abasement of the mind before the Unseen. It is more easy to say this than to explain it, but no one who has worshiped in a true congregation will fail to understand the meaning. Thus, when Frederic Myers heard Doctor Temple preach, he wrote about the refreshing effect produced by the sermon. Temple was very far from being an emotional preacher. He would not have satisfied Lincoln's odd test, "When I hear a man preach, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees." But while he did not rant or shout, he was no cool debater in the pulpit who merely defined and described religion. Temple evidently had the gift of suggesting the living mystery of the faith which he was set to interpret:

> "For, as he spoke, I knew that God was near,
> Perfecting still the immemorial plan,
> And once in Jewry and forever here
> Loves as he loved and ends what he began."

How did Myers know that, from the preaching?

He does not tell; perhaps he could not. But this is part of what I mean by the mystery of preaching, this conveyance to the congregation of the impression that the eternal God is living and working in time, and that our best thoughts, while they verify that constant presence of the Lord, are nevertheless inadequate to explain it. The effectiveness of such preaching lies in this, therefore, that it moves a congregation through thought to what lies beyond thought, and raises them from preoccupation with their own consciousness to the Reality which is more than their ideals of truth and beauty and goodness, to a Reality of God which is "dear and yet dearer for its mystery."

Christian people have a right to this, and they miss it sometimes. They are impatient of preaching that has no such far horizons. Take the remark of Henri Amiel, for example, the Swiss critic and philosopher of last century. Amiel was a radical and a skeptic, so far as evangelical religion went; he had broken away from the Christian creed, but he knew what the Christian religion ought to be and do, and, like Myers, like all true intellectuals, he was among the humblest when he went to church. One Sunday at Geneva he heard a sermon on the Holy Spirit, an able, modernistic discourse, from a preacher of his own school, and yet a sermon which failed to impress him. Why? "I heard this morning," he writes in his *Journal*, "a sermon on the Holy

Spirit—good but insufficient. Why was I not edified? Because there was no unction. Why was there no unction? Because Christianity from this rationalistic point of view is a Christianity of dignity, not of humility. . . . The specifically Christian accent is wanting. My impression is always the same—faith is made a dull, poor thing by these attempts to reduce it to simple moral psychology. I am oppressed by a feeling of inappropriateness and *malaise* at the sight of philosophy in the pulpit. 'They have taken away my Saviour, and I know not where they have laid him,' so the simple folk have a right to say, and I repeat it with them." Now, I do not deny that occasionally there may be a place for philosophy in the pulpit, as in university sermons, though few there be who have any right to use it even there. But surely Amiel voices a profound conviction which is far from being obscurantist. There ought to be the accent and the suggestion of a great mystery in handling any Christian theme, a note of reverence as well as of clear, straightforward thinking. When this is wanting, there is a lack for which nothing in the preacher's intellect or voice will compensate. Not only the poor and simple but intellectuals like Myers and Amiel miss in a sermon the accent of the Eternal, for which the human soul listens in real worship.

This implies, of course, that the sermon must be vitally connected with worship. What dif-

ferentiates a congregation from a political audience, and what marks off the church from an ethical society, is in the last resort the spirit of worship, and the spirit of worship determines what preaching is to be. It is more than lecturing. It is part of the common ethos of a congregation, which is the consciousness that they meet to become more aware of the presence of the living God, and this consciousness evokes moral awe and reverence, a reverence shown, no doubt, in eager thought and a passion for truth, but also in devout sense of fellowship with a God who is beyond our highest words and thoughts. Therefore, when a sermon ends with merely producing the sense of admiration for a skillfully argued theme or for a dramatic appeal to the emotions, when it is so self-satisfied and self-centered that it fails to leave the congregation with some thrill of awe at being in the presence of the same great God to whom they have prayed and sung, there has been failure, failure due to an imperfect consciousness on the part of the preacher that he was there to lift the congregation past his own personality to the presence of his God and theirs. His conceit, his very zeal to speak convincingly of some idea, perhaps his desire to flatter their prejudices and echo their opinions, may interpose between the congregation and their Object of worship. What our fathers meant by "unction" was not an external or affected mode of utterance; at its best it was

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

the result of a consciousness that in preaching as well as in the worship of which preaching forms part, something is done through as well as by the preacher. When he became obtrusive and self-conscious, the sense of this was lost, and Christian people instinctively missed something, something which in a vague way they felt to be vital to the business of the church.

Naturally, this failure may be laid to the congregation as well. If they come for the wrong object, not to worship but to listen to a clever up-to-date talk about religion, there is no atmosphere for the preacher of Christianity, who has to deal with the aspirations and needs of men. If all worshipers would make an effort, like Doctor Johnson, to be in time for service and to compose their minds beforehand by meditation, if they were helped during the service by music that is not vulgar and ostentatious and by prayers which are real prayers and not polysyllabic rhapsodies, there would be some better chance for the poor preacher. I admit that. So far as he has any responsibility he ought to preserve the congregation and himself from such handicaps to reverence. But the point is that the vital sense of awe and the depth in worship which creates the atmosphere for effective preaching is as much in the hands of the congregation as of the preacher. Some of the current criticisms of preaching offered by laymen recoil on their own heads. If they want good preaching, they must be ready

to receive it, for it takes two parties to make a good sermon—I mean "good" in the highest sense of the term. And irreverent behavior during worship or a false expectation may readily hinder the acceptance of the Word.

What I have said applies to all preaching. No doubt there is a place now and then for sermons which deal with doubts of the day or with some passing controversy that is relevant to the Christian cause. Contemporary questions have to be handled occasionally. The preacher has to speak to his time and of his time, and to speak in language of the hour. He has to teach patiently, and often to instruct and remind as well as to encourage and exhort. But at the heart of the preaching which builds up the Christian Church there is, I venture to maintain, the constant sense of mystery. Bishop Stubbs, in addressing the clergy of his diocese, once advised them to "Speak about God and speak about twenty minutes"—which sums up the essence of many courses of lectures on preaching. To "speak about God" covers all life. But it is harder than many realize to speak about God, about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to speak to various congregations in such a way that God becomes not a subject of talk and discussion but a present Reality. It is a strange power, this of the real preacher—not of the popular religious orator—a strange power of revealing to a human soul its own secrets, of stirring some half-forgotten

aim, of opening the door of some new hope, of interpreting what the hearer thought was known to himself alone, of rousing faith and courage, of whetting the conscience for duty, of deepening sympathy, of setting the feet of some upon a new rock of certainty, of making doubts seem less formidable and trust in God more reasonable! A strange power, that requires the sense of pastoral responsibility, deep experience, a sure touch of intelligence, and a profound forgetfulness of self! No hot little soul, no argumentative lecturer, no person set on eloquence, can wield it. Those who exercise it are, rather, men who instruct their people steadily and quietly, persuading them, warning them, encouraging them, but never allowing them to lose sight of the great Center of their faith.

Such preaching is frequently to be found in small congregations, where from week to week men and women of all classes gather to realize the presence of their God and to be helped by preaching that is in line with the worship that reveals to them the significance of their life with Another. Whenever they say to themselves during a service, "Surely the Lord is in this place," the end of the preacher has been attained, for he has thereby succeeded in creating somehow within their minds the living sense of God's presence which is the saving mystery of our religion. He has helped those—and there are more of them in a congregation than we realize—who know that

the one chance for them is a God who does not look on the outward appearance and who knows more than they do about this perplexing life of ours.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

The movements of the Divine Life around us unfold the purpose of God more and more, and it is the preacher's vocation to interpret them as best he may; but they remain a wonder to us in our limited experience. Sometimes they call for faith instead of lying plain to our intelligence. So it has always been and so it will be to the end. The mystery of the Christian religion lies in the revelation of God entering our personal lives with a redeeming purpose and providence through his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. God moves, he has moved and he is moving, not erratically but wisely. All the sacraments and the service of the church turn on this wonder and truth of the faith, this mystery of love and power, which we are permitted to realize and verify in part as we are thoughtful and obedient. Real preaching—and this is my contention—cannot be isolated from these ends of worship. We live in a moving order of things, but by our religion we are committed to the belief that it moves under the sight and care of God the Father. The belief stirs awe and wonder, out of which flow strength and hope and joy. It is the duty of the preacher to explain this belief and to commend it as far as possible,

frankly and fairly, to the reason and the conscience, yet in doing so to preserve the impression that the simple realities of God's love and power neither begin nor end in our finite understanding. It is as the preacher shares thus in the common ethos of worship, as his teaching and preaching end in evoking such a spirit of true reverence for the moving and mysterious God, that he is likely to prove himself faithful to the highest interests of his calling in the Christian Church.

II

THE PREACHER AS MORALIST

RALPH W. SOCKMAN

I

MORALS are to-day in a state of revolution. It remains to be seen whether to-morrow will call it a reformation. To say that the issue will be determined by the ministers of religion is to make an assertion which would be immediately questioned. The prestige of the preacher as moralist has waned. This in itself is one mark of the moral revolution.

In all ages there have been those who challenged the professional preachers' credentials as the spokesmen of God, asking, as in Jeremiah's day, "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us?" But in our age the challenge has gone beyond the credentials of the particular prophet to the credibility of any prophecy. Once the minister of religion in order to have moral authority had only to convince men of his call; now he has to convince them that there is a divine law of conduct to proclaim.

During the theological controversies which disturbed Christendom from the time of Darwin down to the second decade of the twentieth century it was assumed that our moral foundations

were quite unshaken. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch might be questioned, but the Mosaic code of morals was taken for granted. Now, however, the Ten Commandements have to pass an intelligence test for admission to academic circles, and the Sermon on the Mount is to be accepted only if it conforms to the canons of the sociologists. "The acids of modernity," to use Lippmann's trenchant phrase, have eaten their way into the covers of our biblical text from the first page of Genesis as far as the twentieth chapter of Exodus and from the last page of Revelation back at least as far as the Beatitudes. Leaders of religious thought recognize to-day that the line of most severe tension has moved momentarily at least from theology to morals.

The effective preacher must understand the depth and range of our present moral revolution. So many discussions of modern morals deal with mere departments of conduct. So central, for instance, has been made the subject of sex that immorality has come to be synonymous with misuse of that single instinct. If life is "more than meat, and the body than raiment," then immorality is more than lust of the flesh and indecency of dress. The minister as moralist should not conceive his rôle as a mere censor of surface manners nor a fire extinguisher for flaming youth. Nor even is it enough for him to content himself with being a prophet of the social gospel in the sense of applying ethical principles to the prob-

lems of group action. That must be done, but there is a primary matter which must not be left undone. It is the interpretation rather than the application of moral principles, the foundation rather than the superstructure of morality, to which the preacher must first give himself. Whence comes this sense of duty? What makes an action moral? What is the good life? Such are the fundamental questions to be illumined in the present clouded darkness. And pulpit thunder will not take the place of pulpit lightning in illumination.

He who seeks to interpret the moral situation will discover certain distinguishing factors in it. He will recognize, in the first place, that he cannot appeal to some of the old sanctions which our fathers accepted without question. A Samuel stood before his countrymen and said, "I will teach you the good and the right way." It was a very mellow and responsive audience which the old prophet addressed. It had been shaken into complete submission by a dramatic experience. Samuel had been rebuking the people for their disobedience of the divine commands. To demonstrate the heavenly disapproval of their conduct he called upon the Lord to send thunder and rain. Thereupon, according to the record, the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, the rain fell. The people were assured thereby that the Lord had spoken. Trembling and afraid, they implored the prophet to intercede on their behalf.

To-day, however, people do not connect thunderstorms with divine anger, and the preacher who explained a Japanese earthquake or a Florida hurricane as the visitation of God on a sinful people would forfeit the respect of intelligent hearers. Once epidemics were looked upon as the scourge of God, and men probed their consciences to find the cause; our scientific age seeks their cause in germs, not in God, and their cure in hygiene, not in holiness. Not so long ago it was sufficient to cite biblical authority as proof of divine sanction; but our youth in their study of comparative religions discover that other sections of the world have their sacred books, and they ask how we are to know that the Hebrew-Christian tradition is a more nearly true interpretation of the divine will than are the others. In short, once the preacher as moralist stood in the midst of men with authority like that of a traffic officer, able to demonstrate the divine will in concrete ways; now the public tends to regard his authority in somewhat the same light as that of a spokesman for the Paris Peace Pact. The preacher may declare the commands of God as "instruments of national policy" on the part of the universe, but he has no visible means of enforcement. To say the least, the old authority of the pulpit was more arresting.

A second factor in our moral situation which follows close upon the weakening of old sanctions is the fading sense of sin. Cultured people are

talking more about crime which is a violation of the laws of the State; they are talking less about sin, which is a transgression of the laws of God. Perhaps small is the group which accompanies Professor Barnes in the assertion that the word "sin" should be dropped from our vocabulary, because we no longer can know the laws of God and hence should no longer speak of their violation. But there is a plainly marked and vastly wide lessening of sin's vividness due to the changing conception of God.

If a light were held in front of the hand a foot away the hand would cast a very distinct and clear-cut shadow on the wall. But if the light were placed a hundred feet away the shadow would be dimmer and less definite in outline. And if the light were not in one place, but diffused throughout the room from a multitude of bulbs, the shadow would tend to become invisible. The point of this illustration is that the sense of sin is the shadow cast upon one's mind by the putting of oneself between God and his purposes. God in our day is no longer the close-up Being who casts the old sharply defined shadows. Distinct and dark were the outlines of sin when men thought of God as a landlord walking in a Garden of Eden, or as a judge sitting yonder in the heavens awaiting our arrival, or as a bookkeeper recording the Lamb's Book of Life. But the Creator Spirit whose dwelling is the "light of setting suns" is more pervasive and less personal.

It is difficult for the sons of God to retain the old feeling of nearness and responsibility to him when they realize that he is the God of the suns. This vanishing sense of sinfulness profoundly affects the appeal which the moralist can make in our day.

A third factor in the moral revolution is the rise of the machine. Mechanical invention begot an industrial civilization, an industrial civilization begot cities, and cities begot new codes of moral conduct. Woman has been changed from a home-maker to a breadwinner. In an agricultural regime marriage came early, for children were an asset on the farm; in an industrialized city marriage is postponed, for the home is an interruption and children are almost a prohibitive luxury. The flesh rebels under such restraint and chastity is torn to shreds. Close to the soil "the man with the hoe" kept a half-mystical sense of the divine Presence and patience; amid the sharp staccato of the paved streets the city toiler loses step with the God of the harvests and tries to catch the quickstep of the men of the markets. The business order timed to the ticker-tape is putting an ever more severe strain on virtue. The rush of man to keep up with his machine age has given a hectic hurry to his working hours, and his lengthened leisure time is occupied in feverish activity searching for thrills with the result that so-called recreation often becomes a further unraveling of life's moral and physical fiber. The transfer of

our citizenry from the soil to the city has given a sort of hothouse aspect to modern life. Many are trying to force the seasons. Young people in their teens are seeking to get the experiences which used to come in the late twenties. Men of forty and forty-five are restless if they are not receiving the financial rewards and social recognition for which our fathers were content to wait until they were sixty. In this changing tempo we are tending to shorten our normal childhood and lengthen our silly second childhood. It is this urban mind, forgetful of the soil's fidelity and impatient with the soil's processes—it is this mind which the minister has to impress with the old truth that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Will Durant does not very greatly overstate the effect of industrialization when he writes, "The old agricultural moral code fell to pieces and the urban world ceased to judge by it any more" (*The Forum*, April, 1929, p. 228). The rise of the machine, which has so immeasurably lifted our material standards of living, has placed a new and terrific tension on our moral standards of living. Temptations have become more subtle. Contacts and influences have become more complex. Evil grows ever more clever in its forms of promotion and propaganda. The minister who would be a moral guide to his people must be alert to the implications of this changed environment. The good shepherd who tries to lead his people "in

the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake" must recognize that those paths now traverse a world quite different from the Palestine of the psalmist, and he must invoke the aid of that Spirit of Truth promised by the Master whose function it is progressively to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." To think that we can direct our lives by unrevised moral interpretations is as foolish as to think that we could drive our motors through metropolitan streets in 1929 according to the traffic laws of 1870. To suppose that we can combat the evil conditions of our sophisticated society with mere good intentions is as futile as to go out to fight poison gas with the armor of a Don Quixote. And to expect that we can Christianize our urban society by the pure motives of unorganized individuals is as vain as to attempt the irrigation of the Sahara Desert with a garden hose.

Furthermore, the whole moral situation is made to be fraught with tragic possibilities by a fourth factor. The modern rise of the machine is accompanied by a modern fall of man. At the very time our inventive genius is giving into the hands of man an amazingly increased mechanical power, our psychology and philosophy are lessening man's estimate of his own will power and moral responsibility. A behaviorism which has vogue in many quarters would lead us to believe that man himself is only a machine, while an economic determinism which draws many followers in academic

circles interprets man as the victim of his environment. Among popular writers we have the "school of the sneer" which topples our heroes from their pedestals of respect and shows up the man on the street as a moron. Theodore Dreiser, hailed as dean of our novelists, writes *An American Tragedy*, in which he openly interprets character according to the "animal theory of conduct," and Count Keyserling in more recent day contributes a feature magazine article under the caption, "The Animal Ideal in America."

What will be the result of placing more and more mechanical horse power in the hands of human beings who have less and less belief in their moral man power? Inevitably it will mean that our forces of drive will become too great for our forces of control and we shall run away with ourselves.

The "good minister of Jesus Christ" must comprehend these and other aspects which constitute the present revolution in morals. Jesus' counsel to his disciples when he sent them out for their first public ministry contained these words: "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." That is indeed a difficult union of qualities to maintain. There have been ecclesiastical successors of the apostles who displayed the wisdom of serpents divorced from the harmlessness of doves, who matched the wits of secular rulers and made the church quite the equal of the

worldly institutions in shrewdness and diplomacy, even in cunning and chicanery. On the other hand, there have been members of the Christian enterprise who demonstrated the harmlessness of doves, dipping daintily into the clean spots of the world, not stirring up any trouble, but not starting any transformation. Beautiful birds of heavenly passage they were, but, alas! cooing in futile fashion to a society which passed them by.

The Christian moralist must hear again this counsel of his Master and attempt this combination of alert intelligence with good intentions. Like the serpent, he must keep close enough to the ground to understand the urges of earthiness and the animal kinship of men. Yet, like the dove, he must rise to catch the true perspectives and the higher harmonies. Thus will he avoid the too-low-visioned realism of our modern humanists on the one hand, and, on the other, the ethereal idealism of many clerical moralists. How truly does history illustrate the words of Jesus, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." The men of God must show something of the same wisdom in *doing good* that the men of the world use in *making good.*

II.

In the effort to bring a better order out of the present ethical upheaval, the wise preacher will first of all recognize the democratic nature of

moral authority. A rule of conduct is to be obeyed as good only if it results in the welfare of man. Jesus tried to make that clear when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." He was talking to ecclesiastical leaders who were inclined to sacrifice personality to principles. The Jewish scribes of Jesus' day presumed to regulate the conduct of their contemporaries on the basis of a book of rules. "What is written in the Law?" was the question by which they approached every issue. But the Master was not content to rest the rightness of an action on the written word. He supplemented his citations from Scripture with observations from nature and human nature. When he pointed to the fowls of the air and the flowers of the field, when he talked about wise and foolish virgins at a wedding, his hearers recognized his principles as something not out of a book, but out of life. Jesus' words struck the common people as true because they struck a responsive chord in the human experience. Therefore, they said, "He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes had written authorities; Jesus had living authority.

The Christian moralist must follow the Master's method of translating his scriptural textbook of conduct into terms of present experience. He must not ask his hearers to believe a moral principle is true because it is in the Bible; he must show that it is in the Bible because it is true. If,

as we commonly say, the successful preacher is a "man of the Book," he is so only because the Bible is the Book of Life. And that fact cannot be taken for granted with the public of to-day.

Neither can the preacher expect to be accepted as a moral guide because he has the authority of a church behind him. 'Tis true that the devout Roman Catholic still adheres to the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility when speaking ex cathedra on faith and morals. But educated followers of that faith are showing some restlessness in accepting moral commands simply on the ground that they are the edicts of mother church. Ours is a scientific age wherein we look for causes. This spirit of inquiry invades the sanctity of time-honored moral traditions, even the Ten Commandments themselves, and asks why we call them sacred. We cannot make these socially negotiable merely by showing the indorsement of the church. We shall have to show that they were indorsed by the church because they have been proven serviceable to society. That which will gain acceptance for our moral leadership is not apostolic succession, but apostolic success. The test which the public puts to us is not regarding the hands laid on us, but regarding our ability to lay hands effectively on the maladjustments of men.

In our democratic era the preacher as moralist must convince since he cannot command. He must therefore look from rules to results. About

a hundred years ago there lived a philosopher by the name of Jeremy Bentham. Orthodox moralists of his time regarded him as a heretic. But his heresy consisted in this, that he said the test of a good deed was in its results. Theretofore men had said that the goodness of an act inhered in the motives of the doer. If the man meant well, it was counted to him for righteousness. Bentham held that it was not enough to have good intentions. One must look to the effect. We have come to see that Bentham was in line with the mind of the Master who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." In measuring the moral quality of men and their deeds we now look to their fruits in influence as well as to their roots in motivation.

This realization places upon the moralist the increasingly difficult duty of tracing conduct to its consequences. If good intentions be enough, he need only feel to see if his heart is right; but if results are to be considered, he must look to see if his head is right and his hand is right. His task it is to understand how sensitive is the nature of man and how subtly life impinges upon life in our complex and crowded world. He will seek to find out what is for the good of man, for he will see that there is no goodness of God apart from the good of man. He will try to be a true doctor of humanity and not merely an honorary doctor of divinity. And it might be added that while a minister may become a doctor of divinity

by cultivating a single college president, he can become a doctor of humanity only by having fellowship with all conditions and classes of men. He will endeavor to understand human nature, not only by using his intelligence to get the facts, but also by using his Christianized imagination to get the facts in focus; for he will know that all rules of conduct, even the Golden Rule, when practiced without intelligence and imagination, may result in mere irritation. Like his Lord, he will work on the principle that morality is made for man and not man for morality.

Secondly, the preacher who would be a guide in the midst of our moral revolution must see, not only that moral codes are *democratic in basis*, but also that they are *evolutionary in development.*

If God did not hand down his ethical commands by divine dictation, they must have been served up by the people. So say the humanistic moralists of our day. According to them, moral codes are simply custom-made convictions. Good morals are good manners sprayed with the odor of sanctity. Man makes his own rules of conduct. Hence he can change them. He will change them. He should change them. The ideas of right and wrong are merely echoes of social approval in a particular place at a given time.

How far can the Christian moralist go in accepting this human origin and evolutionary development of morals? He has to admit that the distinctions between right and wrong vary from

age to age and from place to place. There is scarcely a vice in our present American code of ethics which has not been somewhere sometime a virtue and perhaps hardly a virtue which has not been somewhere sometime a vice. He has difficulty too in asserting that the voice of conscience is the voice of God, because conscience gives such diverse directions to men in identical situations. During the late war conscience would send one son of a family to fight with the colors in France, while it would send another son in the same family to Leavenworth prison as a pacifist. Conscience bids a Japanese gentleman under certain conditions to commit suicide. Such self-destruction to a devout Roman Catholic is a mortal sin. Is conscience, then, but the voice of the people echoing through the corridors of one's own mind?

Admitting that the codes of conduct and the dictates of conscience change with environment in time and place, does the Christian moralist have to throw away all idea of fixed ethical principles? Granting, for example, that in Solomon's day it was thought right for a monarch to have seven hundred wives, while in our day it is held immoral to have more than one, are we to say that the change is due simply to the increased cost of living and other economic and environmental conditions? No, the cause lies deeper. The explanation is that in the long and tragic experimentation of men, the principle of monogamy has proved

itself to serve the highest welfare of the individual and of society. It is a form of morality which shows itself to be made for man. It has been discovered to satisfy best the full desires of human nature. Thus man, after making many laws of marriage, at last made a discovery of the formula that one husband plus one wife constitutes the happiest relationship.

The Christian moralist does, therefore, recognize an evolution of morals, and it is an evolution from experiment to invention, to discovery. Man tries many ways of living. Out of these experiments he makes certain customs and moral codes. Some of these after a time demonstrate their inadequacy and are discarded.

> "New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
> They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth."

But in that upward and onward search for the better life man discovers some principles of living which are as recurringly sure as the formulæ of chemistry or the equations of the multiplication table. Such principles do not pass out of the textbook of life any more than the formula H_2O passes out of our textbooks of chemistry. Such moral laws are more than inventions made *by* man; they are the discovery of something already made *in* man.

It is at this point, among others, that the Christian moralist differs from the humanist like

Walter Lippmann. And it is a most vital difference. The humanist conception of our moral codes as merely the creations of man makes them seem about as ephemeral as the frosted designs on our window panes of a winter's morning, which the rising sun will melt away. But the Christian view of morals as in part invention and in part discovery means that when the frosted outline will have been dissipated by the light of a new day, it will be found that some lines have been preserved because they fitted into patterns found in the glass itself. Or, to use Lippmann's phrase again, we may say that "the acids of modernity" only serve to bring out the etchings of eternity.

This combination of invention and discovery in making the moral codes ought not to be hard for us to comprehend. Music offers an illuminating analogy. The organist produces music, but does he make it or discover it? He does both. He creates the sound by playing on an instrument, but he produces the harmony by adjusting his sounds to the laws of harmony which have been discovered. Likewise in the making of morals man plays upon the instincts of his nature, but he produces harmony within by adjusting his actions to laws of harmony which have been discovered.

Man did not make those original laws of harmony. It is not within the province of this paper to say more than that they were placed in the constitution of man by his Creator. The

preacher, therefore, admitting with the humanist that moral codes have evolved through experiment, can go on to say that they embody discoveries of divine origins. Thus in the making of morals we are as elsewhere "workers together with God."

When the minister of religion, after taking into account the democratic nature and the evolutionary development of morals, comes to discern the divine element abiding in them, he is in position to make that needed contribution which humanism cannot give, namely, *dynamic*. Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the prophetic voices of our age, says, "If men disavow all faith in a power not their own which makes for righteousness, they cannot finally save themselves from either arrogance or despair."[1]

On the one hand it may succumb to the paralysis of pride. Under certain circumstances it is quite easy to look around in the spirit of Comte at the achievements of man, at the refinements of his culture, at the signs of progress, and thereupon to feel that humanity is on an escalator being lifted inevitably to Utopia. Under other conditions some men are prone to strut about among their fellows with Pharisaical pride, contrasting their own decency and attainments with the vulgar vices and ignoble failures of others.

Either form of moral pride is fatal to moral

[1] Niebuhr, Reinhold, *Does Civilization Need Religion?* p. 52, New York, The Macmillan Company.

progress. Whenever a person thinks he has pretty well arrived, he tends to stop going. This is the truth back of the beatitudes, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth," and "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Both express the same principle, one in the material realm, the other in the spiritual. Meekness of mind and poverty of spirit are simply those attitudes of humanity in which a man recognizes that he has much yet to learn and do. Such humility is necessary to continued attainment. And it is such an attitude that the Christian religion helps to preserve in men's moral perceptions. It keeps men humble by turning their faces repeatedly toward "the pattern shown them in the mount." When, like certain of the Corinthians, people "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise," then the voice of the Christ comes calling them to a higher standard and saying, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The follower of Christ makes every moral achievement but a vantage point from which he sees the peak of a still higher standard to be scaled.

On the other hand, despair is as likely as pride to overtake godless virtue. In fact, the killing frost of cynicism so frequently follows the exotic moral confidence which is not rooted in religion. When Matthew Arnold defines religion as "moral-

ity tinged with emotion,"we are not surprised to hear from his lips those aching words of "Dover Beach":

> "Ah, love, let us be true
> To one another! for the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."

While moods of despair may creep into the mind of the man with a Christian faith, they will not dwell there, for he feels himself in a world where the values of personality are guaranteed. He hears a voice saying to the faithful, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." He has a hope set on him which purifies himself of pessimism and helps to maintain his morale.

"Ah, yes," say the critics of traditional Christian ethics, "the religious man holds true to his moral standards because he anticipates a heavenly reward. But such a hope furnishes simply the motive of self-interest." Such criticism may apply to many who call themselves Christian. But the true follower of Christ does not look to his God as the paymaster at the end of the day's duty, but as the giver of a worth-while day's work and the guarantor of a universe that conserves the work done. A letter lies on the lec-

turer's desk from a young man of artistic talent in a midwestern town. He wishes to come to New York. Why? Is it because the metropolis offers the most lucrative rewards for his work? No. He wants to come even if he starve in Greenwich Village. He feels that in New York he will have the larger scope to develop his talents and the greater stimulus of appreciation. Man, the aspiring artist working to make something of himself, wants a world sympathetic to the sacrifices of love and hospitable to the implications of personality. Such a world is given to him by the belief in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. With this belief to proclaim, the preacher becomes a builder of that City of God here and now, in which, and only in which, the spirit of man finds room and dynamic for continued moral achievement.

In morals ours is a day of undermining and demolition. From the social landscape are being removed many of those customs and institutions which our fathers held inviolate. Looking at the wreckage, one might conclude that the present revolution spells the ruin of the Christian moral order. Yet hear this parable. A prominent corner was recently cleared in America's metropolis. The excavators uncovered a subterranean stream. For long weeks the workmen toiled in the mire with no appreciable progress. Here, it seemed, was to remain an unsightly plot baffling the building genius of man. But after a time the bed rock

was reached, the pillars of a new foundation began to rise, and ere long another scraper of the sky lifted its form, far more lofty and far more graceful than its predecessor. May it not be so in the realm of morals? May not the iconoclasm of the moment give way to the idealism of the morrow? The materials of building are at hand in better quality than ever before—sincerity, tolerance, the scientific insistence on truth, and their kindred virtues. The architect is still the same, Jesus Christ, the Carpenter of Nazareth. And the preacher is still his workman.

III

THE PREACHER AS INTERPRETER

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS

JOHN BUNYAN tells us in his book how Christian, having come painfully through the Slough of Despond, forthwith so allowed himself to be out-talked and misdirected by Mr. Worldly Wiseman that he was near finishing his journey on the steep sides of the hill of the Law before it was fairly begun. Evangelist came up in the nick of time and, having soundly rated him, set him in the way again, and thus with the help of Goodwill he got through the Wicket Gate, where a road begins which, though it be both strait and narrow, will bring a man to the Celestial City if he make no side excursions.

Goodwill could do nothing about Christian's wearing burden, but did tell him that, when he was got some distance from the gate, he would come at the house of the Interpreter, "at whose door he should knock, and he—the Interpreter—would show him excellent things." Christian by this time, being in a bidable state of mind, went on and, having properly introduced himself to the master of the house, was let in with the promise that he should see that which would be profitable to him. What he saw is set forth in Mr. Bunyan's veracious chronicle and does not

concern us here; but the main fact stands that any Christian in his pilgrim's progress needs not only to come to the house of the Interpreter, but commonly to come more than once and make some stay there. Also that as near as may be the present successor of Mr. Interpreter is the Christian minister.

I

One cannot claim that the preacher is the only Interpreter; he is only one of many, since all experience is interpretation and considerable education and all thought beside. We have nothing about us, and never have had, but signs and symbols. Since the first man stood stoopingly erect in a world whose every sight was a wonder and every sound a strange language, we have, after all, been doing nothing but interpreting into terms of our own experiences all those offerings of reality borne in upon us by the tides of time. From the time the child reaches an uncertain hand to touch he knows not what until his world has become real and ordered about him, he is always and mainly an Interpreter.

If it were not for the business of interpretation we should be aliens under our own rooftrees and go down our own streets as those in a strange land. Our senses are interpreters; they allow nothing to pass the gates of which they are the wardens without changing the invasion of it into something native to the uses of human awareness.

The world in which we actually live, sun-lit and star-domed and furnished for our needs, is no more the world of the chemist and the physicist than the "formula for the maintenance of waves against viscosity, by suitable forces applied to the surface is like 'Waters blown by changing winds to laughter and lit by the rich skies, all day.'"

Our world is vivid and vocal, alive as Jacks would have it. The world of the physicist has neither light nor music in it until the eye and what is behind the eye, the ear and what is beyond the chambers of it, translate ether wave and air wave into another order of reality. Whatever a light beam may be in the radiant pulse beat of cosmic energy, it becomes something else when the optic nerve is through with it.

We are beginning dimly to guess how much escapes us. We know that there are entire ranges of light waves of which the eye can make no report at all. We know that the spaces of this church are vibrant with the unheard. Our sense of any reality depends upon some Interpreter *sensitized* to the existence of it, *competent* to put it in some form we can understand. At the end of the chain which begins in a star a hundred light years away, a chain whose links are electrons and ethereally transmitted stress through the frames of space and time, eye lense, retinal sensitiveness, stimulated optic nerve, there is the self which takes all this and makes it meaningful to live and walk by, the substance of the artist's vision

and the poet's song. The hidden Interpreter does his work; he never reveals his secret.

Life itself is the great Interpreter; it is only through its experience that we come to understand, not only the meaning of the world without, but the significance of the hidden world within. The soul has a mystic fashion of subduing to its own needs and restating in its own terms all that the years bring us and all that life asks of us. Life interprets burdens in terms of strength, battles in terms of courage, the swift procession of the days into some richer wealth of experience, and finally all that we do and bear and realize and dream of in terms of ripened character and sense of timeless destiny.

II

In this great affair we are served by specialists. All science is interpretation; it begins with the most evident facts, the crude things of sense—wood and stone and dust and stars. By the time science is done with its interpretation these have utterly changed their character. They have become splendid and ordered systems, they have been dissolved in subtle and universal elements. We had nothing to begin with, we children of flame and dust, save our bare hands and our minds, and yet with our bare hands we have tunneled mountains, subdued continents, and lifted fretted towers. We have fluxed ore and recast it into a thousand forms of beauty or of

use; marble has been plastic beneath our touch, we have changed the face of the earth.

But we have done nothing comparable to the audacious and creative range of our scientific investigation. We have made the stars strange to themselves and reached the threshold of the very mystery of being, and yet scientific interpretation is not enough. The scientist finds none of his facts self-sufficient, and his tides of energy still demand a source. In his ultimate interpretations he begins to use old words again, talks of the infinite and eternal, invests his conclusions with reverence and with wonder, bows like Isaiah awestruck before the presence which fills the temple of earth and sky, and leaves something still unexplained and unaccounted for.

The philosopher is an Interpreter; he begins with our own experiences and the curious problems of knowing anything at all, and how the world without and the world within establish their going contacts. He seeks the principles upon which the conduct of life may be established and offers his answer to the old, old questions—Whence? and Whither? and Why? He is Gautama of the Sakayas under his Bo-tree, or Immanuel Kant taking eight turns up and down the lime-tree avenue at Königsberg, so punctual that his neighbors set their watches by him—while he was redating the course of human thought. He is Plato tracing the source of our haunting ideals of Schopenhauer with no ideal but despair—but al-

ways he is the interpreter seeking the meanings of thought and things and offering some system in which our restless minds may find a little rest. But the philosopher is not enough.

The poet is an Interpreter whose lyric flights follow his vision to some goal of truth or beauty. He finds the enigma of what God and man is in the flower in the crannied wall, makes his appointed pilgrimage through heaven and hell, interprets the yellow records of an old Roman murder trial in terms of greed and love and stainless goodness, or sets the hum of a dynamo to words.

All art is interpretation—the wind-blown marble drapery of Victory, a Pieta bearing her Crucified Son in her arms as though he were a babe again, a pictured descent from the cross. Rembrandt puts all the pity of the years into the face of an old woman. Turner puts the end of empire and battle into an old man-of-war tugged out across a sea of gold into a golden west. The great musicians put all the desired and unrealized into an unfinished symphony, or an epic of pride and power into a symphony Eroica, or else they pray for us or weep for us or send us out singing to victories we shall never win save that we win them seeking them—Interpreters all. But literature and art are not enough.

III

We still have left the loneliness and longing of life, the mystery of our sentient selves in the

cosmic vastness, our travail and our unfed souls. Here religion enters. Religion is the final interpretation of life and all its meanings, its unfinished symphonies, its dreams, its struggles, its haunting sense of incompetence, its timeless nostalgias, its insistent demands—Whence? and Whither? and Why?—and, above all, its quest for a wisdom beyond our own to guide us and the assurance a concern for which our lives have meaning and in which we rest. Religion is older than philosophy or science or art. It began when man made his first gesture toward the unknown, cleared a little region of faith to live in as presently he cleared a little field to plant. His priest-bards who sang their hymns to their gods, his medicine men who assured him against the mischances of life, his wise ones who told him of lands beyond the sunset where his dead had gone and gave him a chart to go by when his own time came, were all interpreters.

He began with what facts he knew of himself and his world. He had the wind in the trees and the daily course of the sun, running waters, and rain, summer life and winter death, the mystery of birth and the dark mystery of death and nothing else save his own unrest and dumb sense of high destiny and kinship with an order other than the world about him. As the horizons of his knowledge widened, their wider circle touched only a vaster mystery. What he knew was never enough, always demanding something beyond it-

self to explain it. And always then as now, man himself was within the circle asking Whence? and Whither? and Why? needing something to worship and pray to, seeking through all his shadows someone who cared—and deliverance from himself.

His interpreters did what they could; we have wise creaking names now for the meanings they found—animism, fetishism, totemism, polytheism, henotheism, monotheism, "isms" like migrant birds blown down the winds of time—interpretations all of the mystery of the world without and the need of the spirit within, in chants and smoky altars and the priest's ritual and the prophet's passion, in prayer and self-scourging, in creeds and bishops, in sacred books and holy symbols in the pictured windows of Chartres, the moving music of the mass, a table with a white cloth laid with broken bread and a cup—a stark cross on a hill outside Jerusalem.

All that religion has been is just that. All that religion is to-day is just that. We now possess the records of the age-old interpretations, the testimonies to what has been found—or revealed. The great assurances have become systems, old experiences have become inherited authorities. The enormous solidity of its inherited forms has often enough hidden the living reality of it, but always in the end it has reasserted its need and its right to become the interpreter of present-tense experiences and present-tense knowledge. What in ourselves and our world impels us to ask

and seek and knock is unchanging—what we have to deal with is always changing and always increasing. "When men think in lightning they cannot pray in lead."

Again and again religion has been shown the door. It has always come back, not through the window, but through our own souls. Our little systems are no longer little systems; the enormous range of human knowledge and the vaster range of human speculations are widening toward the frontiers of the universe. Nor do they wholly have their day. There is an increasing permanence of tested and general consent in science and history. There are bound to be modifications of fact and more considerable modifications of theory, but anyone who is waiting for a general dissolution of the present scientific order particularly will wait a long time. And then he will be confronted by another scientific order more solidly established. But we still say with the poet—

> "They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Now, all these things combine to give significance to the preacher's task to-day. The preacher has been and is many things—prophet, apostle, scourge and benediction, evangelist and the voice of authority. His formal authority is, I take it, greatly diminished and his field has in some ways narrowed—though he does not always preach as if it had, claiming instead every interest of life

which will furnish a Monday newspaper with a headline. But he is still the mediator of the everlasting reality of religion to an age which needs above all to know the meaning of what it is doing, to discover the spiritual behind and through the marvelous presentations of the material which science supplies.

Our world is not suffering from the want of facts nor opportunity for action. It is smothered with things ponderable and imponderable, whose meaning for the final values of life it does not understand—nor does it see too clearly what these values are, nor does it know from whence its help should come. The preacher, more than anyone else, has the duty and the power simply to help people to understand. There was a time, not so long ago, when religion supplied both the facts and their interpretation. To-day, whether we like it or not, our facts are given us from secular sources and we have no choice but to accept them, if they come tested and proved. Our knowledge vistas have opened immeasurably in every direction. We have gained a new knowledge of ourselves. We can no longer select our facts to fit our interpretation of them; we must fit our interpretation to the facts. We face a general independence of judgment, we face a vaster confusion of thought. Our inherited faith is up for re-examination; the pulpit itself is under scrutiny, and there are not wanting those who prophesy its eventual disappearance.

Meanwhile I believe myself that the preacher was never more needed, his task so significant, the challenge he faces so kindling. Nothing will displace the preacher, nothing can. The minister has long ceased to be—excepting the lawyer, the doctor and the school-teacher—the only learned man in his parish. He is in competition with every kind of printed and spoken word. He is no longer supreme in the region of ethical adjudication—certainly not alone. I am not sure that he is always wise in dealing with perplexing matters of conduct—I should hesitate to put the control of government in the hands of any body of clergy. We are, as has been said, no longer the dictators of facts outside our own province, but we have life and the gospel left, the needs of men, and the everlasting reality of religion—these are enough.

The preacher may be what he always has been —a minister wise in counsel, rich in sympathy, an understanding friend sought by those who other times forget him in the supreme experiences of life. He will direct his church and support his boards and attend his curiously and variously named ecclesiastical gatherings. He will administer the sacraments and lead in worship. If he is wise, he and his church will broaden the whole foundation upon which the general power and service of the church rests, until it is no longer a pyramid turned upside down and balanced precariously upon a half-hour's sermon once a week with some support from a quartet. He will be

prophet and evangelist and teacher, but he will be also—and I think, if his ministry stand strongly through the years, more constantly than anything else—the Interpreter, though it will be always hard to tell where his teaching ministry ends and his interpretative ministry begins. No one of all the Interpreters who translate the plain or mystic characters of the handwriting on all the walls of life has such subject matter to interpret. Nor, if his interpretation be right, is anything else to be compared with its high significance.

IV

He has to begin with the whole substance of the inherited faith of the church. He would be strangely foolish to disregard this if he could—and he cannot. It is the long creation of the questing spirit of man, the long issue of the self-revelation of God. It is compact of the contributions of the wise and the good. It contains the ancient voices of the prophet and the apostle. It includes all that lies between us and them. It is the deposit across the centuries of the wisdom and spirit of Jesus Christ. The Bible supplies the authoritative substance of it—creeds and theologies are the interpretations of vanished generations.

And yet some subtle elements of change let down a veil between us and even our near past. Words grow old and the living understandings of them are lost. They are always needing to be

rebaptized into experience, charged with current meanings. Some of them would be better returned from circulation altogether. Moffatt's "Realm of God" fits the mind of our time better than the Judaic "kingdom of God." There is always a relation between the general mind of any time and its statements of faith. It is the task of the preacher to put the bequest of the past into the terms of the mind of his own time. And he needs to be a citizen of his own time entirely at home in the very shadings of its thought to do it. I doubt if any man ever preached with entire understanding to more than one generation—the generation he belongs to himself. Otherwise he is a voice from the outside. The preacher needs always to remember that all theologies grow out of life. The rigidities of Augustine are molten in the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. The preacher must be a theologian—that is the skeleton which supports the living substance of his message. Otherwise he will be a jellyfish of a preacher, pulpy and possibly slippery, taking color from whatever medium he happens to be in. But he is not really to preach theology; he is to interpret it.

V

Theology needs to be put back into life. The great centralities of the Christian faith are rooted in the ways and laws of life itself and they are all capable of being so interpreted that they fit into

life like great words to great music. Unless the Word becomes life and dwells among us, it is shadow, ghost, what you will. The central dogmas of any religion are the hard-won expressions of the needs and satisfactions of the soul. The Christian creeds have a basis in the facts or teachings of the New Testament, but if they had no other support they would be like a bridge pushed across an abyss with no supporting pier on the other bank to take the thrust of it. The creeds themselves are interpretations and the forces which shaped them are what the soul wants of God.

Thomas Hardy voices no little of the mind of our time when he sings of the "Graveyard of Dead Creeds":

> "I lit upon the graveyard of dead creeds
> In wistful wanderings through old wastes of thought,
> Where bristled fennish fungi, fruiting naught,
> Amid the sepulchers begirt with weeds."

If Hardy had ever assisted at any ecclesiastical gathering, assembled, not to bury a creed but only to perform a minor surgical operation upon it, he would not have written quite so confidently. A creed is harder to bury than almost any other human thing through some tenaciously vital quality of the faith within it, and even when apparently interred has a way of coming to life again before the echoes of "Earth to earth and dust to dust" have died away.

But there are graveyards enough of dead inter-

pretations, though all dead interpretations are not yet buried. God is not dead, but the teaching of God as though he fitted only a little world and not the universe is dead. God needs interpreters who add the mystic's sensitiveness to the astronomer's vision and the psalmist's sense of his brooding presence to the physicist's perception of an infinite force out of whose tides all reality is born. The Bible is not dead, but the interpretations of it which satisfied our fathers are dead. The Bible needs interpreters who find God in history and science and know how a book can be written by manifold shaping forces without and within to contain within its covers the luminous records of a timeless quest and the supreme answer.

The historic creeds are not dead, they are instinct with life. There are anticipations of the incarnation and the atonement older than Bethlehem and Golgotha. There is no doctrine which is not rooted in human longings old as sin and loneliness.

The cross is planted in the deep foundations of the living order, every flower by the wayside which lives a summer out and dies for the seed in the capsule of it is incarnadine with some red from the dropping of its outstretched arms. We are comrades of the cross in every transfiguring or saving experience of life. The mother knows it in her travail, the soldier in the field.

The sacrament is always the mediation of a higher reality through the medium of something

that can be sensed and broken and shared. There is not a central article of the Christian faith, I repeat, which cannot be interpreted to meet the needs and satisfy the mind of the generation to which you are to preach. But if doctrine is ever to lay hold of life, it must be re-interpreted, put into terms which fall in with experience—or else touch all experience with a light to lend meaning to our confusions and perplexities.

The language of theology has not become exactly archaic—it has simply become remote; some of it has the smell of an old unventilated library—dull wisdom gone moldy. It is dim with detachment, the set description of a transaction in a region unreal to the thought and experience of our own world. And yet the creeds themselves were drawn molten from a living passion, voted for, to begin with, by men who came blind of an eye and lame of a leg from persecution. It is the business of the preacher to get them back into life again until when a man says "I believe" his head and his heart go with it.

VI

Beginning with the interpretation of the substance of our Christian faith the preacher must interpret the meanings of the general experiences of life. He will always be dealing with people who do not understand themselves nor what is happening to them. The generality of folk get on well enough when things go well enough, but let

some storm blow in upon them from far regions and they are lost. They are always asking in any sorrow or loss, "Why did this happen to me?" though one must confess that we take life's happier issues less inquiringly. The whole shadowed side of life has challenged us from the beginning. Every religion has its way of fitting the evil of life and the goodness of God, and one cannot on the whole feel that our explanations have been always adequate.

But that does not change the need for interpretation; it rather increases it. Faith demands a support in the assurance of God's love and wisdom made manifest in his actual dealings with us through experience. The preacher must take light and shadow, laughter and tears, the unnoted day and the unforgettable hour and fit them into faith—never forgetting that old, old question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" A good deal of helpful interpretations must, I am persuaded, be in terms of what Henry Churchill King calls "Quest for Character," but no matter. You must learn to find yourself the meanings of all experience in the love and wisdom of God and help others to do the same thing. There is a very noble old Hindu teaching which asks in a series of questions—Upon what is the world woven, warp and woof? The answers carry the questioner back to Brahma, and after that there is no answer. The Christian preacher has never done his work till he has shown that all the mingled

web of life so strangely shot with dark and splendor, is woven, warp and woof, in the love of God.

I should carry all this too far if I sought to touch every region into which this key principle carries the preacher. I am only indicating an inclusive method and an endless need. Our own time needs very greatly a sense of the true values. We are born value seekers. Any man can be trusted to spend himself for what he really wants. The thing is to get him to want what is worth spending oneself for. Life is too precious for many of the investments of it which are always being made. Jesus was always reaching for the motives of men, and he never scorned the appeal of profit and loss: "What shall it profit a man?" "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Because you know the true measure yourselves you are the interpreters of it to others, guiding them through the lure of little profits and evanescent rewards to those values which are independent of changing markets and belong to the timeless.

The preacher is the interpreter of the struggles of sense in terms of the victories of the spirit. He is to oppose the enduring to the transient, the regnancy of the spirit to the usurpations of the clay. An Indian king once asked his teacher, "What light does a person have here?" And then as each light proposed seemed not enduring, the questions grew more insistent:

"But when the sun has set, and the moon has

set and the fire is gone out, and speech is hushed, what light does a person have here?"

"Then," said the teacher, "the soul is his light."

But there is another light than that—"I," said Jesus, "am the light of the world."

VII

The Christian preacher has then finally to interpret to a world in the dark without it, or lit by fitful gleams of God and truth, the gospel of Jesus Christ, to make his precepts clear for action, his teaching clear for thought, his saving love clear for salvation. It is no easy task to carry the ethical and spiritual sovereignties of the Sermon on the Mount and the parables over into the fierce drive of a Western competitive and acquisitive civilization. But the hope of the future is just here, and if the Christian preacher does not do it there is no one else. Or else there is such a need as cannot easily be put into words to carry up the enormous force and achievement of our present order to the levels of Christian idealism and quiet our restlessness in the peace of God.

I have touched a little upon the need of interpreting the awesome conclusions of science and the wealth of knowledge into the ultimates of faith. We have no alien and ineluctable stuff to deal with. The final assumptions of science and philosophy are marvelously hospitable to their translation into praise and the felt nearness of

God. The impersonal assurances of the infinite and eternal beyond which secular thought does not dare to go need only to be rebaptized into a living faith in a living God to bow us upon the "great world's altar stairs which lead through darkness up to God," chanting those ascriptions in which the soul finds its peace and the mind its light: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty." There was never such a near wealth of reality waiting the office of the Interpreter, never such need that what we know and do should be put at the service of the soul.

We have everything, but the meaning and destiny of our own lives escapes us. We know so much, and our knowledge only haunts us with its deepening suggestions of something beyond the power of the laboratory to analyze. We have a splendor of knowledge to be filled with the splendor of the knowledge of God, a splendor of force to be put at the service of the Realm of God, a pity of tears to be dried by the comfort of God, a questing loneliness to be lost in the assurance of the Fatherhood of God, a strange helplessness at the heart of all our strength to find its rest in the strength of God. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the answer to it all. It is the shining task of the Christian preacher to interpret that to the world.

But the Interpreter must understand. He must understand the message he is to translate.

He must understand the realities into which he is to interpret it. It is no easy task—but the service of it is beyond computation. I am not sure that the House of the Interpreter will always be crowded—but it will never want guests who, having been instructed, will thereafter find their pilgrim way more plain and their assurance of the City which hath foundations more firm.

There is a lovely touch in Bunyan's allegory. The Interpreter lighted a candle for Pilgrim to see by. We, at least, can furnish so much light as that and speed those whom we shall serve with the Interpreter's benediction—

"The Comforter be always with thee, good Christian, to guide thee in the way that leads to the City."

Perhaps they will answer us as Christian did:

> "Here have I seen things rare and profitable
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Then let me think on them, and understand
> Wherefore they showed me were, and let me be
> Thankful, O good Interpreter, to thee."

IV

THE PREACHER AND THE PROPHETIC TRADITION

JOSEPH M. M. GRAY

WHEN I rise to speak on "The Preacher and the Prophetic Tradition" I am entering upon an ancient theme, but one which is, nevertheless, pertinent to our generation. There is, to-day, a new emphasis upon the development of forms of worship, reflected in the literature, architecture, and observances of contemporary Protestantism. There are also the multiplying and more practical demands made upon the ministry because of the social and executive duties gathered to it, removing it farther than ever from the career of studious and priestly isolation which once it seemed to be. Both of these features hold for us large possibilities of disaster. In his most recent volume Professor John Baillie observes that when a community stakes everything on a meticulous reference to the sayings and doings of its founder, it is a sign that his living spirit is deserting them; and in like manner it may be feared that when a church becomes insistent upon meticulous or ornate forms of worship or complex mechanics of duty, the living passion is growing dim. These tendencies to ritual and to administrative enter-

prises are each pressing hard upon the preacher, are productive, and, perhaps, are inescapable. But they maintain alike the peril that the preacher will permit one or the other—one because of the other—to become a substitute for his true vocation, the interpretation of time in the light of eternity, the criticism of life as the spokesman of God.

The corrective of that peril is a living consciousness that he is called by God; a phraseology and a form of thought not as constant to-day as formerly. The ministry will always suffer unless the minister prosecutes his work with that scrupulous concern for technic, and that forbidding resentment of interruption, which characterize the successful profession; but the flavor, the favor, and the compelling passion of it will be lost unless fundamentally he regards it as a vocation to which he is constrained. The effective preachers have always impressed their contemporaries as being re-enforced by the eternities; and no man so impressed others for any length of time who was not himself inescapably assured. "I heard the voice of the Lord . . . And he said, Go, and tell." That is the way one prophet-preacher entered upon his vocation. "The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, . . . I have appointed thee a prophet." "It came to pass . . . that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." "The word of Jehovah came . . . saying, Arise." "The burden of the word of the Lord." So others

found themselves thrust out for enterprises too gigantic for themselves. John Knox needs no introduction and offers no apology for the thunders with which he shook thrones, set armies marching, and recreated a people's faith. But he resisted a hundred urgencies to preach until, besieged in the Castle of Saint Andrews, his death desired with that of his associates, he looked from the castle window and saw the place where, a year before, George Wishart, that impassioned evangelist of the new Protestantism, had been burned to death. In the very menace that his own preaching meant he found his call was sure, and set out upon his march through history until, as the English ambassador to Scotland said, "This man Knox is able in one hour to put more life into us than five hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears." No man who cannot look out of imprisonments of good desire and see ahead with unmoved courage the martyrdom of pleasant, even worthy choices, can enter the prophetic line. That is not to say that this sense of call will always burst blazing within from the initiation of the will to preach. Too many great spirits have begun, like Matthew Simpson and George A. Gordon, in timidity, and were borne to strength upon the wings of patient kindness. But the preacher, like the prophet, comes early to the impregnable certitude that the Lord has spoken to him with a strong hand. "As for me," is a truly prophetic testimony.

"I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord . . . to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin."

This sense of call, rightly apprehended and constantly vitalized by that thought upon his ministry which should be the preacher's habit, will keep us from indulging the specious alibis we are tempted to offer for our shallow, unmeditated utterances, our scant acquaintance with the currents of contemporary thought and feeling; our intellectual frugality, to capture a quotation from Professor Fitch. There is considerable being said and written concerning the minister's bondage to these multitudinous demands which rob him of time and uninterrupted opportunity for thought and reading and study such as was the privilege of the great preachers of the past. Not long ago one letter to the religious press pleaded that the preacher have leisure and serene surroundings, that he might walk in hushed woods amid the music of birds and the flaming beauty of nature, and so come to the saving message for his people's need. Another earnestly desired that there be an easy chair in every study, and that the minister use it, and there, in the seductive and holy leisure of an eremite with modern conveniences, have time for such dreams as great preaching is made of. It would be ludicrous if it were not for the tragic misapprehension of the ministry which such fancies indicate. The preacher *is* in bondage to innumerable details. He must

visit homes like a physician; he must deal with boards, committees, and social enterprises, like a business man; he must co-operate with philanthropic agencies and interdenominational activities like an executive secretary; he must feel and appreciate the currents of opinion like a politician; he must be acquainted with and accessible to the pathos and peril of human hearts, and impress them with his personal character; he must direct, or co-ordinate, suggest and cultivate varied activities within his church; and with all of these engagements he must challenge the respect of his community, capture its attention and command its thought by his preaching. And he can never do it if he considers these activities bondage, or if he escapes from them to the mediævalism of sylvan calm or seeks in sunny dreams the sources of transforming truth.

For the men and women to whom he speaks are not inhabitants of Arcady, happy dwellers on the slopes of Helicon, engaged in passionless, high dramas of the mind remote from the march and thunder of commonplace but inexorable affairs. They live in a world of struggle. They are battling, day after day, with business responsibilities and the drudgeries of the home. They are carrying debts and lifting mortgages and facing labors that seem to have no end. Some of them, like Ruskin, have no pleasure except in memory and no hope but the grave. Their ears grow tired of the tempest of the street and their spirits must

brace themselves continually to endure the clangor of everyday things. For them there are no quiet places. What amusements they have rattle to the roar of orchestras which long since substituted noise for beauty, their evenings at home are turbulent with radios that make much ado for the most part about nothing at all. It is not a voice from the woods or the echo of a dream that will interpret time for them in the light of eternity. It is a voice beside them sounding through the tumult of their day. It is not an essayist nor an artist whose word can reach them; it is the prophet, and the prophet is the center of the crowd. Isaiah was, as he faced down the political leaders of his Jerusalem and held a people steady while barbarian armies came rolling up against the very gates. Amos was, as he left his herds and figs and hurried across the hills to the city where injustice thronged the streets and ground the faces of the poor. Jeremiah was, as he defied the tests of orthodox patriotism, rebuked war lords, bought real estate to prove his confidence in God, lay in prison, and went away with the captives of his people captured when the doom which he foresaw had fallen. The preacher must be immersed in life, not lost in reverie. He is a man called into the world, not out of it; a man sent, not a man sent for. The word he sees must be a hot word kindling in the friction of events that make his people's lives, not some pale glow glimpsed in drifting twilights where time moves

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

in pleasant cadences and contacts are always gentle. General Joseph Hooker, reorganizing the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac for a new effectiveness, is reported to have met the objections of a staff officer with the remark, "I have never seen a dead cavalryman." When emphasis is laid upon the multiplying labors of the preacher which prevent his preaching ministry it may be well to recall that he is still the best life-insurance risk. The clergy seldom die young, and more seldom yet are our illnesses from overwork. Silvester Horne put into a splendid generalization what I have made more narrow and specific: "A sense of responsibility to a church may be a very noble feeling, but a sense of destiny to a city, a town, or a village is a far greater thing."

The flat, obvious platitudes of our preaching are due, not to the fact that we deal with petty details, but that we do not deal with them as if they were petty. We permit them to become ends and our preaching an adjunct. They are part of the scenery through which the mind marches, but we allow them to block the way. It is the consciousness of a call which will save us from them and from ourselves; for the call is to the prophetic tradition, to an enterprise which does not reject the details, but which is much larger than the sum of them; which holds them subordinate yet cherishes them as instruments through which the preacher makes effective contact with life.

To keep in mind his place in the prophetic tradition will likewise constantly vivify the preacher's conviction as to the meaning and purpose of his ministry. It will prevent his slipping, intentionally or by chance, into the pedant, the perfunctory, or the clown. Every man ought to be acutely concerned for the size of his congregations, for one who is called to preach cannot intelligently remain indifferent to the areas of opportunity he is commanding. But, as Canon Raven has observed in his *Wanderer's Way*, "It is easy to mistake pandering to the passions of a crowd for prophesying to a company of worshipers." Held to a vocation, the preacher is not given a world of aims from which to select, or a series of varying enterprises to pursue. Preaching takes innumerable manners but keeps one essential character; it is the endeavor, as one of its most eminent living exponents has said, "not to get men to accept a formula, but to get them to reproduce a life."

The Old Testament prophet was striving always to bring to his people a vision of life as his apprehension of God enabled him to perceive it; and it is, perhaps, the province of the historian to tell us how far the prophets' failure was due to the lack of an intimate contact with, understanding of the kind of life they meant, when God was discernible only in infrequent and awful theophanies. Jesus kept to the principle and purpose, his most germane utterance being the

admonition that his disciples were to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect. The New Testament preachers carried forward the same emphasis with their proclamation of Jesus, Saint Paul representing them all as he exhorts the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." This, of course, is the Life the preacher is to get men to reproduce; and it is here perhaps that the supreme need of the church and of the world to-day is to be found: for a pulpit which will accomplish the old results in transformed lives, with the new apparatus of scientific scholarship which is demanded of it, and the new familiarity with scientific conceptions and the revolutionary social mood, to which it has to speak. It is the need for a pulpit, as Bishop McDowell said years ago, which "will put the edge back upon the best truth we have, the truth of redemption."

I am not reverting to the phraseology or the ideas of revivalism as we have known it, nor hinting at any recovery of those sensuous conceptions of salvation which led John Wesley to write, one hundred and fifty years ago, "Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal, that has neither sense nor grace, bawl out something about Christ, or his blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, 'What a fine gospel sermon!'" But I am willing to declare that some new boldness, some new bulk and definiteness and biting sense of reality, both of need and of privilege, must be

brought back to our religious thinking or the multiplying prophecies of Protestant collapse cannot be dismissed as vagaries of strange minds unfamiliar with its secret power. Christianity is not engaged in a debate to-day; it is fighting a battle, and—what may perhaps cheer us for a moment but must solemnize us for an hour—it is not Christianity alone, it is every great religion which has long laid hold upon the deep centers of personal life and thought. Buddhism, Islam, Judaism—all are to be found side by side with Christianity embattled and beset by the most disintegrating forces which religion has had to meet in generations, if not in centuries: the force of mechanistic philosophy not alone vocal in classrooms, but positive, though inarticulate, in crowds upon the street, the force of materialism of temper and belief, the force of social interests erected into final causes. As a result immortality has faded and the grave has lost its terror because it is accepted as the end; the moralities are regarded as sanctions and restraints which society has established as instruments of survival only; "sin" is a word without weight because mechanism yesterday, humanism to-day, have removed the hallucination it used to express; and "God" is but the name we have given to the ideals humanity has won out of its struggle through time. In the face of that attack, Gothic architecture, stained glass, chapels for strangers, the exploring, experimental, and somewhat con-

fused religious education of the times, great choirs and new Methodist responsive services, will no more avail than the reactionary theology, scantily educated ministry, and bleak meeting-houses of generations ago. We will agree that any creed must be tentative, that theological theories describing incalculable processes in the spiritual world are ultimately futile no matter how sincere; but God and the world and this strange, thwarted, questing Somewhat we call life must be more than tentative; or we will be driven at last to take our stand with Bertrand Russell upon the firm foundation of unyielding despair. Men will never undertake to reproduce a life unless the values which that life represents come to them with a compulsion justifying, in their minds, whatever may be the cost involved; and the only preaching which can exhibit such values with such compulsion is the preaching which puts the edge back on the truth of redemption, however humbly it shrinks from dogmatizing upon theories of it.

It would be difficult if not impossible to imagine two minds farther apart than John Arthur Gossip, that tumultuous Scottish preacher, and Mr. Walter Lippmann, of the New York World and the "Preface to Morals." But here they strangely stand together. Doctor Gossip, in his latest volume, tells of presiding at a congregational meeting called to hear the report of a deputation sent to hear a prominent preacher

with a view of extending to him a call to the vacant pulpit. The committeeman who made the report was an attorney who reported favorably of the service attended, of the sermon's quality, and of the attractiveness of the minister's personality. But the committee would report no more than that. Then he added: "The fact is, I for one am set down among earthy and material and sometimes rather squalid things; these make my life, and the church services are my one chance. Unless I see God there, I shall forget about him altogether, shall lose sight of him, amid the din and the dust and press of life. And while this preacher taught me, interested me, even fascinated me, while he was preaching I had given me none of that needed sense of God."[1] Mr. Walter Lippmann, remarking that many reasons have been adduced to explain why people do not go to church as much as once they did, says, "Surely, the most important reason is that they are not so certain that they are going to meet God when they go to church. If they had that certainty, they would go." And when I read those two utterances, this past summer, my mind went back to a nameless English merchant of the seventeenth century, writing of his visits to some Scottish churches in the great days of controversy then. "I came to Irvine," he said, "and heard a well-

[1] *The Hero of Thy Soul*, John Arthur Gossip. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

favored, proper old man, with a long beard, and that man showed me all my heart. Then I went to Saint Andrews, where I heard a sweet, majestic-looking man, and he showed me the majesty of God. After him I heard a little, fair man, and he showed me the loveliness of Christ." And who will doubt that David Dickson, Robert Blair, and Samuel Rutherford were in the prophetic tradition?

We phrase our duty differently, we speak a different language, and think of the sublimer verities in different fashions; but the substance of prophetic preaching remains. Topics, occasions, terminologies, vary with the swiftly changing pageantry of life and the interests and emergencies of society. But the substance of prophetic preaching is humankind in relation to God, and the enlarging disclosures of his character; men and institutions, in those relations each to each and to one another required by the austere moral fact without which life and the world are meaningless; the life of time in the light of eternity.

All of which means that it is now an enterprise more difficult, more perplexing, more beleaguered in a bewildered world, than ever before. It is no dreaming business amid which the facile musings of protected leisure can fall gratefully upon harassed spirits. You might as well pronounce the benediction over a hurricane. Amid the whirl of life in which he is hurried like his brethren, the preacher is to hear

what history has to say, what life has reported in literature, what his contemporaries have discovered through the labor of science, what society is learning in its experiments in human relationship; and through it all he is to discern, in something illimitably more compelling than a theological term, a word of God made flesh. The longer a thoughtful preacher lives, the more appalled he will be at the intellectual resources and achievements which alone would fit him for his work; but as he looks back he will be almost equally awed by his discovery of the profound fitness of the Hebrew prophets, the multitudinous knowledge of Saint Paul, the gigantic mental labors of Luther and Zwingli and Calvin; or if these be too remote and high, the intellectual activities of Wesley, of Frederick Robertson, of Canon Mozely and Dean Liddon, of Phillips Brooks and Henry Ward Beecher, Henry W. Warren and that spirit whose name here must be as a pillar of fire, George A. Gordon. The prophetic tradition has no happy eddy in which slovenly minds, or lazy minds, or even antic minds can drift and be other than grotesque comments on the great seaward stream. And because the true prophet can never get his spiritual insight at second hand, through all his rugged contacts and mitered understandings with men and women in his own world, the preacher is to distill all that he draws from this great complexity of experience

into the truth which, when spoken to his contemporaries, will press upon their conscience the imprimatur, "Thus saith the Lord!"

The preacher, then, with his ever-varying reaffirmation of redemption summoning men into these constant discernments of the eternal through the enterprises of time; challenging men always, in the emergencies of the commonplace, to reproduce the Life; will look frankly, deeply, with no merely casual glance, into the social relations and institutions in which they must make the attempt. He will pass judgment—and I mean just that, judgment, not prejudice—upon the questionable practices as well as the preventable wrongs of society, and against them will turn his whole armory of truth empowered by passion but humanized with intelligent sympathy. For no man dare proclaim the reproduction of the Life and remain indifferent to the conditions in which it is to be reproduced. One of the most germinal and revealing words in all the panorama of the Apocalypse is that of the one like unto a son of man: "I know where thou dwellest." It is part of the incredible wonder of the gospel, part of the incomparable heritage of the church, that men and women can be Christians, can be Christlike, can be and have been, in any circumstances—Ghettos, slums, deserts, mills full of atrocity and battlefields drenched in filth and blood; but no man can be a Christian who is willing to let them stay there. The paradox of

the social gospel, a paradox which has not, I think, been clearly enough recognized, is that its greater salvation is for those who do not need it, but who are spiritually doomed unless they make others its beneficiaries. The publican had no need of the Pharisee's compassion, but the Pharisee was heading straight for the hell that consummates an ingrown life because he was not compassionate. Any man can get along without justice being done *to* him, very many men do; but no man and no society can stay long unless they *do* justice to others. Here are at once, the preacher's authority and the limits within which he is to exercise it, for invading the regions of business and industry, politics and society, with those more impertinent exploitations which anger the persons involved and their editorial associates, but which are his most pertinent applications of the principles of eternity to the things of time. It is not the preacher's business to furnish a social program or a scheme of industrial reorganization or to write legislation. It is his business to discover, to identify, and to declare the ends of righteousness, to reach which those responsible and competent must provide the programs, accomplish the reforms, and enact the laws. And I am not of that school of suave and decorous prophecy which would bravely criticize society in general, institutions at large, politics in the broad, and permit the social leaders, the director of the institution, the

particular politician, to remain anonymous and undiscovered. It is because of the necessity, on occasion, for the prophet to cry, "Thou art the man!" that his critical judgment must be humanized with intelligent sympathy as well as empowered by a reforming passion. It goes without saying that the preacher at war with any social ill, critical of any unsocial personality, must be armed with accurate and thorough knowledge. It is no mark of prophecy, however impassioned, to speak like a fool, or to make bitterness of criticism do duty for possession of the facts. Geoffrey of Monmouth was a very fierce critic of his times, and a Frenchman with an equally biting wit said that he died as a result of tasting by accident the tip of his own pen. Too many preachers whose social energy is expressed in criticisms unsupported by evidence, likewise perish in the eclipse which follows unreliability.

I could wish that time and the proprieties permitted me to say much more here, but though abruptly, perhaps, it must be said that the preacher in the prophetic tradition dare not ignore the form in which his word is to be uttered.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.

"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my

judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard? the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." Does any one imagine an eloquence like that burst from Isaiah unstudied, or that any other speech would so well have driven the consolation home? "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets." Certainly, Micah was not indifferent to the garment in which he clothed his truth. It may be that the language of Jesus has escaped us but it surely left no impression of carelessness upon the minds of those who preserved for us the Beatitudes, and the Sermon on the Mount, and the parable of the prodigal son. Throughout the New Testament as throughout the Old, there is a cogency of style, a fitness of the form and color of the words impossible to ascribe to accident or the impulse of the moment. How well the later prophets knew the value of form as well as substance can be easily seen in the sermons of the great past, from the directness of the Puritan Election Day sermons, the lucid penetration of John Wesley's English, the driving force of John Bunyan, to the marching phrases of Richard S. Storrs and the wistful, fragile, but decisive beauty that belonged to George H. Morrison. Preaching is

not flinging ideas out, like mishandled flowers, stem-end first; it is provocative disclosure of the truth by which men shall be moved to reproduce the life of Christ. Truth that moves men thus must appeal not alone to the mind but to the emotions because the energies of both are necessary to constrain the will; and truth reaches the emotions, not so much by itself as by the language in which it comes. You may say, for illustration, that humanity is one in its experiences; or you may say, as George Morrison, whom I mentioned a moment ago, said: "There is one common heart by which we live; one common life in which we share; one common enemy awaiting all, when the pitcher is broken at the fountain." The expressions mean the same. But one is the language of triteness, the other is the language of power. One is obvious, the other is awakening; and the difference between them is the difference between platitudes and preaching.

In one of the letters of Marcus Aurelius, written when, as a young man, he was traveling, he tells his teacher that as his party went through the gate of the old town of Anagni, they saw on each side, the inscription, "Priest, put on thy sumentum." Marcus inquired the meaning of it and was told that the sumentum was a bit of skin, taken from a sacrifice, which the priest put on his cap when he entered the city. The preacher may well forget the element of sacrifice in his

vocation; as Livingstone at Cambridge University said of his labors in Africa, there is no sacrifice worthy to be mentioned. But no preacher dare forget the awesome constraint which called him into the prophetic line: its immersion of him in the tumult of the world, its compulsion of him to the loftiest obligations of the mind, its bondage of him to the re-creation of men, the clarity and confidence with which it demands he shall disclose the Life that is the life of men, the courage it requires of him in the face of human ills, the labor it imposes that his truth shall truly be expressed. There is his sumentum, august, inexorable and haunted by eternity. On the gates of every morning as he enters each succeeding day he will read the admonition to put it on! for only as he lives beneath the glorious torment of such divine vocation shall men hear his word as though it were proceeding from the throne of God, from that imperious city of our human quest whose voice is as the sound of many waters.

V

THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE MINISTER

J. Edgar Park

Saint Francis of Sales said, "The knowledge of the priest is the eighth sacrament of the Church." The idea that the clergyman should possess certain expert knowledge not generally shared by the laity has persisted in certain communions. In highly protesting Protestantism sometimes the clerical office has degenerated so that a clergyman is not expected to be an expert in anything but only a good fellow about town. The minister with no exact knowledge of anything but who feels that his smile should be enough to justify his position has been known to exist. Alarmed by such a phenomenon some communions hold that the clergyman while inexpert and unintelligent is in some mechanical way a channel of magic power to his flock.

We dismiss both these conceptions of the ministry as unworthy. But if we adopt the idea of Saint Francis of Sales, we are faced with the question, What is the expert knowledge which ministers should possess? There is a tendency on the part of the human mind to dodge the real issue. It is always easier to get scholars learned in the side issues than to find some

expert in the heart of a subject. It is easier to teach the dates of Shakespeare's folios or to analyze philologically his vocabulary than it is to become an expert upon Shakespeare himself. It is easier to know the dates of the kings of Israel and Judah, or to be able to draw an exact itinerary for Saint Paul's missionary journeys, than it is to acquire expert knowledge on the subject of religion. Yet there is no doubt that religion is the subject about which a clergyman should know something.

A modern poet says:

> "But the world is not chance, except to those
> Most feeble in desire; who needeth ought
> Shall have it, if he fill his soul with the need."

Here is a subject which comes near to the heart of religion, and the test of the validity of orders, as in every other profession, is not merely the good will and fine spirit of the individual but accurate knowledge in his own field.

A clergyman should be an expert on prayer. This is his field. He has been set aside professionally to know something about prayer. He is the only person in modern society dedicated to this special task. Competitors in other fields vie with him in the practice of oratory, the teaching of personal ethics, the inculcation of the duties of social service and citizenship, and the search for a theory explaining the universe. But if he does not teach the heart of religion, no one else is likely to be doing it. He has the

assistance of tradition, and favorable atmospheric conditions surround his church. He alone is in the place designed for conserving and enlarging human knowledge on this great subject.

Living practical faith in prayer has to a great extent died out of the Protestant churches. Fear of superstition has scared the life out of Protestantism. Great tracts of valuable territory have been abandoned under the attack of pseudo-philosophic guns. Protestantism retains prayer largely as a rhetorical ornament, or an indirect method of preaching. We need to return and reoccupy some territory very near to that which we recently abandoned; the philosophic guns were largely loaded with blank cartridges. Let us try to get a faint understanding of some of the principles of real prayer.

Man's wishes have always been greater than his powers. He has always desired more than he is able to obtain. This condition is due partly to laziness and partly to ignorance. His ambition outruns his ability, whether his ambition is stimulated by his hopes, his fears, his affection, or his hate. This overflow of desire has generally run to waste in moods of bitter rebellion against things as they are, or in apathetic resignation, but in the case of more vital spirits it has organized itself into effort, research, experiment, and prayer.

The results of this organization of unsatisfied

desires have been science and religion. The primary postulate of science has been that it is not merely enough to desire to get something, it is also necessary to know how to get it. For science all the desire in the world is of no value unless you discover the laws by which the universe operates and humbly follow them. Lovers at opposite ends of the continent have longed for centuries to hear the sound of each other's voices. But all their yearning was unavailing till men got busy and discovered the laws by which the vibrations of the human voice could be communicated to a disk of metal and there be made to vary the quality of an electric current, which transmitted over wires a similar vibration to a far distant disk and reproduced there the very tones of the speaking voice. The highly theoretic research into the laws of electric-telephony was to some extent the result of a desire to hear distant voices. It was not enough to wish to hear the voice, one had to work for years in order to discover how to hear.

Mankind sought at first to gain its ends by simply wishing for them or peremptorily demanding them, but gradually learned by experience that the shortest way in the end was in going to the school of the universe and finding out there by what principles they could be achieved.

The history of magic is the story of the fruitless search of the centuries for some formula

which has merely to be uttered in order automatically to bring one that which is desired. When in face of some fearful epidemic a whole tribe went forth in procession with drums and cries and demands, it was an attempt to force the fulfillment of their desire that the scourge should cease. But the skies seemed as pitiless brass above them till they found by sore experience the one loophole of escape, and observed the constant vigilance of sanitation.

But however far man pushes back the dark shadows of laziness and ignorance, he is never able fully to compass his desires. Man may know much of sanitation and of the laws of health, but when some one dearer to him than life is sick, after he has done all he knows or can, there is a great overflow of desire. What is he to do with it?

There are three historic answers to this question, the solutions offered first by magic, second by naïve religious faith, and third the suggestions offered by a study of the constitution and workings of the human mind.

Magic seeks a shortcut from desire, through ignorant authority, to fulfillment.

Naïve religious faith tries by imagination to humanize the universe and obtain benefits from it as though it were merely another human being.

Scientific religious faith recognizes that the universe is not merely another human being, but

must be induced to serve our ends by methods peculiar to itself.

Magic has been discredited because it does not work sufficiently well, it has given place to science. Man can, in proportion to his knowledge, make the universe serve him, as in chemistry and physics. But man's desires extend beyond his scientific knowledge, he longs for things which chemistry and physics are unable to give him. So he has postulated a great personal Being at the heart of the universe who stands to him in the relation of Father. Naïve religious faith believes that simple childlike requests offered to this God in faith produce results. It has treated this God just as it would treat a powerful human being from whom it desired benefits. Sometimes primitive peoples have flattered God, sometimes fawned and humiliated themselves before him, sometimes threatened him if he did not grant their requests, sometimes used intermediaries like the saints to induce him to change his mind. Every form of persuasion which a suppliant would use in presenting his case to a human ruler has been employed in the endeavor to gain from God the fulfillment of the wishes of men.

A critical study of the results obtained by this naïve religious faith has led in recent years to a fuller understanding of its points of strength and of weakness, and has enlisted not only the intellect but the imagination as well in the attempt

to gain for man the fulfillment of his deepest desires.

The real problem of prayer may be stated in this way: Is there a certain mood or attitude of the human mind which is a condition in itself of obtaining certain desired results in the outside world? Can I attain in myself to a certain attitude of mind which of itself will be a cause of a change in the health of another person or in the events which confront me? We are not discussing now the nature of that mood. It may be one of petition or resignation or suggestion or imagination or faith. It may be directed toward another person or be merely an independent mood of one's own soul. The question is whether or not an inner state of my being can change and influence, apart from my own actions, the texture of the outside world. This change may be produced directly or through the agency of another person; the question is, Does it, even if unexpressed in my outer act, have any causal power upon the world? Magic believes it does so automatically. Naïve religious faith believes it can do so by means of the influence it exerts upon the mind of God, who is so touched by my mood that he changes his mind and alters conditions to meet my needs.

Philosophic thought has tended to discredit this naïve view of prayer. The philosopher is apt to argue thus: If God is good, he will always act toward me in love; therefore all petition on

my part is useless, since God is just as interested in my welfare as I am myself. Prayer for the philosopher is a mystic union with God, a sinking of oneself in his will. It is the boat hook which does not draw the shore to the boat but the boat to the shore. In such philosophic prayer there is no place for petition. Realizing the mystic fact, "In His will is our peace," the philosopher meets his desires with this argument: This condition of affairs could not exist if it were not God's will; to ask for a change is to ask for something which is not God's will and which would therefore be bad for me; I will therefore ask God for nothing, but merely trust him and acquiesce in his will.

This view of prayer seems theoretically sound but is practically impossible. Human nature has its overflow of desire which must be expressed apparently either in worry or petition. Common sense refuses to believe that all external events are the will of God. Events which appear to be the most external to ourselves may be results of internal conditions in our own hearts and the hearts of others. To most human beings the power of idols has seemed to be the clearest case of influence external to the human race. Yet the power of an idol never really existed outside of the human heart. The modern world worships disease germs with the same seriousness as primitive men worshiped idols. They seem to us to be external forces of evil.

Perhaps they are. Perhaps their power over us is due to conditions internal, to human faith in them, fear of them, and ignorance of the principles of mental as well as physical hygiene.

A truly adequate view of prayer to-day will learn something from a critical study of magic; something from philosophic criticism of prayer; much from the naïve practice of prayer and from the mystics; it will add to these its knowledge of the actual workings of the human mind as psychological investigations have been able to uncover them, and it will contribute a certain prophetic insight which it is the peculiar function of religion to foster and which makes religious faith always the growing point of human experience, the new shoot not yet fully understood, but from which new branches of knowledge may grow.

I am not afraid to say that religion has something to learn from a critical view of magic. Heiler says that magic is distinguished from true religion by this fact: In magic the mood or formula operates automatically toward the end desired; in religion the mood or formula is considered as of value only in so far as it influences God to change things for us. But I think religion would be wiser not to dismiss the automatic operation as entirely superstitious. Prayer is of many forms. This is one of the lowest forms of prayer, but for most people it is a step in the right direction. The lowest form of prayer

is simply pulling the boat of our own life into the current of the general laws of the universe. The change of mood from the self-suggestion of evil to the self-suggestion of good is the first step toward getting in touch with God. It works automatically. There is no idea of changing God's will or asking for his personal attention. It is turning on the faucet without calling up personally the manager of the municipal water department. It is a recognition of certain principles which operate automatically. A stone falls to the ground in accordance with law without any conscious call to the ruler of the universe to see that it falls. The lowest form of prayer, which many pious folk are apt to skip to their own hurt, is simply using the known laws of the human mind by self-suggestion and hygienic organization of the inner life. It is hard to get anywhere in prayer unless you take this first step. It is hard to expect peace of mind when your whole mind is a bird of sable feather attracting to itself every gloomy raven on the landscape. You must first learn the laws of common sense which rule inside your mind as well as in the outside world.

God even more than other personalities must be known as a principle before genuine personal communion with him is possible, and modern knowledge has extended greatly our conception of the laws of God. God's laws extend into the inner mental and imaginative mind of

man. As we look back at this process from the heights of fuller spiritual experience we can see that all these laws are the will of a personal Friend, but for many people, immersed in material interests, they can best be applied as automatic principles till a fuller experience gives a deeper understanding.

There is, however, a great practical risk about this approach to prayer. It is as great a mistake to think this type of self-suggestion or demonstration is the whole of prayer as it is to neglect it altogether. It is the threshold of prayer. It is the coming into the presence of God.

In primitive prayer the approach to God, the getting in touch with God was undertaken by flattery, praise, by promising gifts or obtaining the influence of powerful friends.

The wiser worshiper to-day tries to approach God by discovering from his universe the kind of person he is, and endeavors to come into touch with him by becoming his kind of person, living according to the principles of his life. The attitude is that of one who seeks to be engaged in the firm of an employer. He is foolish if he depends on influence or flattery. He is wise if he proves to the employer that he is at one in principle with the methods of the employer and the aims of the firm.

You must to a certain extent understand and get into harmony with another human person-

ality before you can hope to become his friend. So you must first become obedient to the known laws of God's world, you must be carried on the current of the river of his will, before you can hope to launch your craft on the unknown sea of personal communion with him.

The mood of prayer can be induced by rationally understood means. But prayer itself cannot be justified or explained in any way definitely established by the present stock of knowledge either of the philosopher or the scientist. It is an act of faith the grounds for which lie not in theoretically proven knowledge but are found to be so only by individual and social adventure and experience.

To remain at the stage where God is Principle, where one only has to demonstrate, is manifestly a symptom of arrested development similar to that found in the worship of the law in legalistic religions. It does work in its narrow field but is a solitary and mechanical operation resulting in arrested development which at any stage of religion means intellectual stultification. Your religion must be growing or it is dead.

If one were to attempt to state general principles of prayer in accord with our present knowledge one would have to recognize that it is an art and, like any other art, must be learned from its elementary stages with possibilities at the end of the process hitherto unattained. One cannot with any hope of success turn in an emergency

from a life almost wholly materialistic in its interests and technique and simply call up God on the prayer telephone and by saying, casually, "Hello, God!" come into full and immediate communion with the mind and heart of the universe. Those naïve religious spirits and those masters of the spiritual life who have this immediate touch with God arrived at this power through such discipline as is indicated by the words "fasting and prayer."

These may be said to be some of the principles of intercessory prayer or petition:

1. Prayer operates in the sphere outside of one's own present will. It is when one has done all that one can at present do to attain one's desire that prayer legitimately comes into being. There is a marginal territory which is more preparation for prayer than prayer itself which is concerned with mere self-suggestion and the strengthening of one's own efforts. The line is not clean cut, but there is a distinction between mere resolution to do better and the cry of prayer offered at the extreme limit of human effort. It is mere foolishness to try to shift onto God the responsibility for seeing you pass your examinations—the responsibility is upon you. If you do not work during the term, prayer at examination time is not noticeably efficacious.

2. Prayer operates in the atmosphere of extreme emotion. For this reason scientific demonstrations of the results of prayer cannot be made

in psychological laboratories. The same difficulty confronts one here as in the sphere of eugenics. It is impossible to arrange by laboratory methods that two people picked as eugenically fitted to be mates should fall in love with one another, in order to facilitate the eugenic experiment. It is equally impossible to fulfill the conditions of Huxley's suggested experiment—that of isolating in one ward of a hospital patients to be prayed for and in another patients not to be prayed for, in order to test the validity of prayer in hastening their recovery. Love and prayer have roots too deep and widespread in life to make such experiments possible. Genuine emotion of the type which motivates petitionary and intercessory prayer cannot be brought into a laboratory. Prayer is the organization of the overflow of desire which cannot for the moment be worked into action and which must therefore either run amuck in worry or seek an orderly outlet in prayer. Public prayer should be entered upon only when the corporate emotional mood has been established.

3. Prayer is concerned more with the imagination than with the will. As has been said, its sphere of operation is that which lies beyond the territory ruled by one's own will. Worry is the imagination of the worst. Prayer is the imagination of the best. One has only to compare the influence upon the child of a mother who worries about him as compared with that of a mother

who prays for him, to begin to understand the method of prayer's working. Here is one mother who continually suggests evil to her boy by her meticulous solicitude. But a white-haired man told me recently that all his brothers had turned out well although their mother during their youth was far away, a missionary wife in India. But then he added, she used to write things like this from India: "I thank God that I do not have to worry about any of my boys." Now, I admit one has to have that subtle thing called personality in order to make the power of that prayer hold in a letter from India to a boy in America. But prayer does somehow produce the personality which carries it. If one studies the methods of healing used by Jesus, especially his question, "What would ye that I should do for you?" which concentrates all the patient's imaginative emotion on the picture of the sight or healing desired, one will begin to understand more of God's laws of prayer. The very face and gesture of the worrier communicates to the sick or tempted child the picture she has conjured up of death or failure. The sick man saw and felt his own health reflected in the radiant confidence of the Master. And our minds are *en rapport* with the minds of those we love in ways even more immediate than can be expressed by the body. It is true of this sphere that in the duel between the imagination and the will the imagination always wins.

4. He who prays should think of himself not as a suppliant before a throne, but as a channel preparing itself to carry the river of God's power. There is no question here of changing God's mind or attracting his favor. The problem is that of preparing a channel by which his good will can reach the point desired. We must be to the Almighty what a man's hands are to him. Only through our love and faith can God's goodness reach him for whom we pray. In some places even Jesus could do nothing because of the unbelief of those nearest to the needy. God works through human love and faith.

Our task is to find the laws which prepare us to be the channels of his goodness. Only through a confident imagination of the good to be desired, a cleansing of one's own motives, self-forgetful dedication to God's revealed will, common sense, knowledge of the workings of the human mind, faith that God is not the author or designer of disease, unhappiness, pain, fear, or failure—only by preparing oneself to be a clean channel for good will and health and success and joy can the miracle of God's answer to prayer take place. I was recently interested in the preparation of a hymn book to be used in a hospital for the mentally afflicted. It was extraordinary to find how many popular hymns there are which could never be used in an environment such as that. They were too full of expressions of morbid minds such as "hosts of darkness prowl and prowl around."

It brought home to me how many of our religious formulas have a like morbidity about them. The simple dogma that "God is love" and that war and suffering and agony and sin are the results not of God's will but of man's ignorance and laziness and selfishness would, if followed, eliminate all this morbid material. God is like Jesus. If he cannot act, it is because there is no way for his power to reach the point needed, no human being clean enough, imaginative enough, common sense enough, disciplined enough, to be the channel for the river of his goodness.

5. As I have said, in prayer one must begin small and practice. To begin by praying for the evangelization of the world in this generation is a mistake. You never lost a night's sleep over that problem yet. Begin by praying for something you desperately desire, something definite, so that your confidence in prayer may be established by success. Do not try to pray for what you think you ought to pray for. Pray for what you want. Sincerity is prayer's first law.

6. In the process of prayer the sublimation of desires takes place. God does not engage to give you what you ask for, but he does undertake to satisfy you abundantly. His promises exceed all that we can desire. If you begin to pray for material things, in the very process your desires rise in the scale of value, so that in the end the prayer is granted, perhaps not by a mere gift of these material things, but by a new ability to

produce even better things for yourself and others. The lower forms of prayer operate even in the sphere of selfish desires, but unselfishness is necessary to produce any of the real miracles of prayer. God helps those who help others. Act as if all men were your brothers and the universe will begin to act toward you as if it were your father.

7. Jesus taught that persistency is necessary in prayer. You do not become a fit channel by one gesture. You must keep at it. If you only had persisted! Perhaps when you ceased praying you were just about to enter the gate.

The process of persistent prayer is most effective in enlarging the soul. It is in itself religious education. The person to whom the prayer is granted is always a different person from the person who began to pray. The world in which the prayer is granted is a different world. The God who grants the prayer is not the same as the Being to whom it was first offered. As in the opening of a safe, the combination must first be found, then the spring which was there all the time operates and the bolt slides back. But if one ceases when one degree more of a turn was needed, the safe is closed as inexorably as at the first start. When the right mood, the personal attitude through which God alone can work is found, the spring which was always there operates and the bolt slides back.

8. In the higher reaches of prayer such as have

been attained by perfectly unselfish souls and by the great masters of devotion there is a personal communion with God. One comes at last to be able to talk to God as friend to Friend. This is perhaps not as common an experience as has been usually represented. Only in rare moments perhaps are we able to rise to this peak experience when we are conscious of interchange of communion with God himself. Much unreal sentimentality in religious worship is due to the attempt to appropriate spiritual experiences, as if they were common affairs when they have been won only by long discipline in rare moments by the rarest souls. How seldom are we able really to come into full harmonious touch with another human personality even with all the helps which bodily presence affords!

With God communion must be entirely spiritual: our mortal ears hear no voice, our eyes see no face, nor can hand clasp hand. Yet the testimony of all religions and all ages and all lands pictures with strange unanimity an experience—the greatest possible to man—when, through unselfish attainment and knowledge and long striving, in ways one cannot communicate or express, man can rise into conscious fellowship and communion with God.

Only by a study of the relations between human personalities can we make a start in understanding the relation between a human personality and God.

The personal relation between man and God begins in those rare higher regions where two human personalities have attained to understanding and unity. This, I take it, is the meaning of the words "God is love." Most of our human relations are relations between bodies and are dependent on eye and hand and voice for their being. Occasionally, however, relations are established which are independent of these means of communication. It is possible at rare moments to come into immediate touch with another human personality. When the principles of one's own life and those of another are at one, when hopes, fears, ideals, ambitions are so much one that even speech is unnecessary—then one has a foretaste of what communion with God may be. It is the relation of a true musician to the composer whose work he interprets; it is the relation of a son who is carrying out the work for which he was inspired by his father; when two friends together enjoy some glorious scene of nature or some common enterprise of danger and daring, there is a point where no external words or signs are necessary—they are one: they are one because they are one in God. In such experiences we all have our first insights into the experiences of the saints who come at last to such unity with God.

It is this experience which the Gospels are trying to express. The discipline which prepares us for it is the discipline of the scientist who dis-

covers and obeys the law, but it is also the discipline of the lover who discovers and worships the person. These two sides of prayer have become largely divorced in our world. We have blind scientists who see and obey only microscopic laws. We have expansive religiosity which pours forth vague emotion and careless assurance. The union of the careful student and the enthusiastic lover produces occasionally the man or woman with power in prayer. God is a person. But he is a better person than any we have known in the flesh. One can become one with him only by knowledge of his ways and by partaking in the lofty emotions which rule his life. Preparation for prayer is the remaking of ourselves in his image, but when even an infinitesimal beginning has been made in this direction, there is absolutely no limit to what God can do through you in changing this world.

To sum up the main ideas of this view of prayer:

God, like any personality, is first known as a principle, is more difficult to know than a human personality because bodily aids are largely absent. Knowledge of his ways comes to the pure in heart. Only those who set their faces in the direction where he is can see him. He reveals himself first as a power working through us.

Fulsome praise, vain repetitions, careless petitions, slovenly attitudes of mind such as we should scorn to use in approaching a great and

good human personality are much more out of place in drawing near to God. It is a false romanticism to believe that prayer operates without exact knowledge or disciplined emotion. It is the flower of the simple childlike life which is not easy to attain, but is a high achievement, missed by the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes.

This childlike communion with God is not reached by casual gestures and conversations vaguely felt as being in the direction of the Unseen. It is the result of mental discipline and tested knowledge. It must be sincere; that is to say, it must grow naturally out of one's unsatisfied desires, it is itself the process of their purification and it results in the end in a unified personality at one with God.

Here is a dialogue, the phrases of which are familiar to you, which expresses the history of prayer in the human soul. It opens with the word of God as he looks upon the distracted spirit of man:

God: You can never be satisfied till you find your rest in me.

Man: There is no health in us.

(Religion must be theocentric. Without self-abasement it becomes ethical theory.)

God: What wouldst thou that I should do to thee?

(Man dimly hears God's voice through his desire but cannot see him. His answer is an imaginative picture of his fulfilled desire.)

Man: Lord, that I might receive my sight.

(The faith required for such fulfillment is a by-product of a life lived in the current of God's laws.)

God: Believest thou that I can do this?

(Man's answer is "Yes . . . No . . . Sometimes.")

Man: Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!

(As he prays he realizes that he cannot dictate to God *how* his desire is to be fulfilled and as the process of sublimation begins to operate he adds:)

Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.

God: Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace.

(Having rested his faith in God, he knows his request has been granted, his desire is one with God's.)

Man: I thank thee that thou hast heard my prayer, for thou hearest me always.

So the prayer life develops till with some rare souls the vision of the Divine, the communion with God becomes as real and plain as friendship with another human friend.

The Master said, "Mary." She turned herself and said, "Rabboni," which is to say, "Master."

VI

THE PERSONAL FOUNDATION

WILLIAM FRASER MCDOWELL

"Other foundation can no man lay than . . . Jesus Christ."

FIFTY years ago last month I came to this city and university to study theology and related subjects; preaching and things related to it, like literature, art, philosophy, and music; life as it opened before an inexperienced youth; and religion as a living thing open to all the influences that might fall upon it. I think I had the enthusiasms and visions that belong to youth, but I know now, after a half century of experience, that they were pretty thin and superficial, not having much depth or richness. They were nowhere near equal to the enthusiasms and dreams that have come during the half century of experience of life and of Christ. Joel was entirely right in the prophecy quoted by Peter at Pentecost. But for me the dreams of an old man are richer and finer far than the visions of a young one. This also is according to the laws of the Spirit as the Spirit works in a human life.

I come back to-day not to make a technical contribution to these studies but to bear a brief testimony and to leave on record a conviction

about preaching which the years have so deepened that even to think of it seems to bring me to a new mount of transfiguration or a new bush that burns and is not burned up. For I thank Him that put me into this ministry that he has never let me lose "the vision splendid."

Some of you may have read a small volume of lectures entitled *Good Ministers of Jesus Christ.* Some of you may even remember the essential feature of the lectures. Stated briefly, the entire volume was based upon the philosophy that supreme events like the incarnation, the atonement, inspiration and the like were both events and principles, events that happened and principles that abide. That philosophy of interpretation offers to me the most fruitful and vital insight into the Scriptures as a whole and into the life and ministry of our Lord in particular that I have ever found. I would like to have it remembered by my brethren in the ministry even though most that I have said has been forgotten.

And I think of the ministry, the whole noble business of preaching, with this philosophy of the ministry of Jesus Christ as a foundation. It was an event and a principle, a ministry that in one phase of it took place in time, but which in the essence of it abides through the ages. Privileged as I am to speak here in this place with the influence of this school and city upon me during the years, I desire to lift before you, before my younger brethren in particular, that philos-

ophy. I shall try to avoid repeating what has been said elsewhere, but shall also try to set out again that other Ministry as the basis of our own, craving the presence and blessing of that Other Minister to-day and every day. If we miss him, nothing else matters. If our ministries are based upon him and his, pretty much every good thing is possible. Indeed, every good thing seems obligatory. We would not dare put wood, hay, and stubble into a structure built upon that foundation. When we have said "Other foundation can no man lay," we are compelled by all the logic of the spiritual life to "take heed how we build."

We know, of course, how sensitive many people are lest the unique place of Jesus shall be forgotten. But there is a very essential difference between recognizing his unique and exalted place and putting him so far away that he is no longer in any real sense God with us but, rather, God in some far off place, high but distant. We do not honor him most by the kind of exaltation that amounts to separation and detachment. He came from the divine heights and realities that he might be near, to live among us. As one of the newer translations puts it, "The Word became human and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory full of love and truth." And that is the basis of our own ministries. Our roots run into his life or they do not go deep enough. The ministries of other men are both events and principles, the

ministries of Simpson and Brooks and others, but their ministries, noble as they were, do not furnish a soil deep, rich and lasting enough for all the ministries of all the churches in all the centuries. There is no other foundation than that which is laid in Jesus Christ and the ministry of Jesus Christ. And the whole fate of our modern ministry depends upon its likeness to him, upon his actual power and supremacy in it, and in every part of it. If any denomination wants to make sure of a ministry effective enough to win and conquer modern life, its first step is to obtain a Christlike ministry.

But now let us look at three elements of his ministry, which are by way of illustration of this philosophy of the event and principle. We could take other three or several times three. This is not exhaustive but only illustrative, intended to create in us the habit of saying as we study any incident in his life: "This is the event in his life; what is the principle in it that reaches on into mine?"

1. From the preacher's viewpoint the first, the outstanding event lies in what has been called the "miracle of his words." Our prompt inclination when the speech of Jesus is mentioned is to begin to rhapsodize. His words deserve all the halos that can be thrown around them. Really, we wonder at the restraint of those who said simply, "Never man spake like this man." We would have piled up adjectives

and adverbs about his utterance. We have done it. Indeed, we have done pretty nearly everything about the speech of Jesus except the one thing actually needful. We have not tried to discover in what he said and the way he said it the abiding principle of the use of language to convey truth and to influence life.

There are three things involved here: the contents of one's speech, the form of it, and the purpose of it; the truth, the statement and the intention. Have you anything to say that may fairly be called a message or a gospel? How are you going to say it to other men? Why are you going to say it to other men? Really, the perfection of the Master's thought, the character of his thought, and the wealth of it are enough to put us all to shame with our shallow thinking, our meager truth and our barren ideas. We are not used to think of the perfection of his thinking as both an event in his ministry and a principle binding on us. We put him on a pedestal where we can admire him while we do our thinking according to other and lesser models. Does it mean little or nothing to us that never man thought like this man? And yet the kind of thinking he did constitutes the only sound principle of thinking for good ministers of Jesus Christ the world over to this day.

Have you ever seriously studied the thinking of Jesus to discover how he did it, to find out the processes of his mind? Most of us stop short

in mere admiration of the greatness of it. Really the straightness of it is as remarkable as its greatness. But suppose now as a subject for thorough study, in order to get a personal thinking model for your thinking as a minister of Christ, you devote a few years to the sincere and unflinching endeavor to see just *how* Jesus thought, just what he thought about, how he used his mind, how he regarded truth, how human life figured in his mental processes, how God appeared to be related to his thinking, what he thought *for* as well as what he thought about. I suspect you will find that Christlike thinking is all too rare among us, that it is the hardest, straightest thinking there is and that only such personal thinking really deserves to be regarded both as an event to know and a principle to live by.

We have plenty of other kinds of thinking. And some of that which regards itself as Christlike is only amiably pious thinking, wholly unlike his vigor and thoroughness. But we have Protestant thinking and Catholic thinking, denominational thinking within the Protestant group and party thinking within both; we have conservative thinking and radical, fundamentalist and modernist; we even have racial and national thinking, white, yellow and black, German, French, British and American. All these are entirely natural with human nature as it is. They are not mentioned for purposes of severe

criticism at all, but only that we may say of each of them that it is not fit to be universal or to dominate the thinking of any minister of Jesus Christ in this day, and that it will not save the world. In a sense that has not existed in the ministry as a whole anywhere, any time, Christ-like thinking has got to exist if the mind of Christ is to be made in the world, and if the thinking which Christ did and does is to be at once an event in his life and a principle for all life.

Remember that the test of all thinking lies in its value for life. It must be brought to that test. Is it good to live by? And this is the hardest, highest thinking there is or that any man can do. In this test Jesus excels all others. Much has been made of his own admission that he did not know a certain date. But not enough has been made of the far more significant fact that not one of his moral judgments or insights into life has ever been set aside as mistaken. And here in this sacred place, with the whole deep question of effective preaching before us, I proudly and gratefully lift before you this personal event, that there was one minister who did primary thinking on the primary matters of life; who did not waste first-class thinking on secondary matters, nor do second-rate thinking on primary matters. Many people think that any kind of superior intellectuality will do, that mere ability will answer. But as ministers we are dealing with life and redemption, and the only

kind of thinking for us is the Christlike kind. And that kind was intellectually accurate and morally, personally, humanly vital. It was an event, it has got to be a principle; an event in one Minister's life, a principle that must abide and control in other lives if the ministry of that first one is ever to come to its full power among men. There seemed to be nothing lacking in his sufferings as an event, but an early minister wrote some very sobering words about supplementing them, filling up the sum of them. There seems to be nothing lacking in the thinking of Jesus as an event, but I think even that awaits its completion in the thinking of those ministers of Christ who are set to do Christlike thinking in modern conditions and with the modern church which is still his Body.

Thus far I have had in mind the substance of Jesus' message, the contents of his thinking. It seems very holy and exalted to me and I hope to us all. We ought to be very humble, to walk softly, with bowed heads and hearts, to "carry our shoes in our hands," just because we are in the presence of a thinker like Christ. We ought to make the most of that One. There are so few. But we cannot get any further without seeing and saying that the manner of his message is also an event and a principle. We are not quite accustomed to regard our rhetoric, our language, the words we use and the sentences we make as having the quality of sacredness. We forget

practically and only remember doctrinally that once a message got utterance in a Person, full of grace and truth, full of charm and reality. What does speech serve? Of what is it the instrument? It serves truth and life. It is the redeeming God, forever trying to reveal himself to men, all sorts of men, dumb, slow, stupid ones as well as the others who are quick, keen, and discerning. One minister used this instrument of speech worthily, speaking as never man spoke, so that his words were both spirit and life to other men. That was the outstanding event in the way of speech in our long and confused human history. It is also the one shining, abiding principle for human speech to this day. The manner of his utterance was as holy in his sight as the matter of it, holy because of the matter. If a man has nothing worthy, useful, redemptive and noble to say, he does not need noble speech. But if one hears as he begins, the words, "Preach the gospel to every creature," he must know that he must use the Galilæan accent and, as far as he may, a Christlike clearness, graciousness, sincerity, and nobility of speech.

Have you listened to what people have said of your own and other men's sermons? Have you heard anybody marveling at the gracious words that fell from your or their lips? If you have heard that spoken softly and as under the spell of God's presence, then you will know that a man has been saying a Christlike thing in a

Christlike way. Beware what you listen for and long to hear at the close of your sermon. I have had clanging compliments that must have been directly due to the sounding brass of the sermon itself. But I have heard sermons that made me feel that an angel had spoken. I recall one on the Beatitudes which must have given happiness even to the Author of them.

I am trying to say that the perfection of Christ's speech was an event and a principle. The event was that he said the best things ever said and said them in the best way. The principle is that this thing that he did with divine perfection ought to run on into the preaching of every man who preaches the gospel to men. The event is that he did it as well as he could do it. The principle is that there is no other way than that for any man. No one of us will reach his perfection. No one of us has any right to fail to try to do it after the Christlike manner. I have heard it a few times in prayer and once near this very spot when a man in a plain room spoke one day of God. No one took notes or accounted the lapse of time, but for a lifetime men now old and worn have remembered it as though the heavens had opened before them while Borden Bowne spoke of God.

2. The second large way in which his ministry was both an event and a principle is seen in what he did, in his activities and the way he performed them.

This event and principle theory is not made for any minister's personal comfort. It makes the Gospels very disturbing books. They do not seem to encourage the popular elective theory under which a minister may choose between preaching and pastoral relations. Some like one, some the other, but that other Minister whose ministry was both an event and a principle does not appear to have made our modern distinction between them. Of course we all know what an acute personal problem this is. It involves for serious men the eternal conflict between the claims of study and the claims of personal contact. And too often in our human weakness we have tried to solve it by working down instead of up. All our solutions must be made at the highest levels, just as our ideals must always emerge there. These gospels disturb us, but they would disturb us far more if they were not on such a high plane. Really, we preaching men ought to thank God every uncomfortable day of our lives for the fact of that other One who said so much that was worth saying and did so much that was worth doing; who apparently kept his life from the distraction that goes so far to ruin ours; who preserved perfect unity and balance between speech and activity; who by his own life set in all the ministry that bears his name the principle of redemption in both word and deed. All the time he was the Redeemer who had come to minister. That

note was in all he said and all he did. On that level, the level that he never dropped below, he could hold in unity these two elements of a ministry which on lower levels so many of us divide.

I think I see where we are coming out here, but just now we are not quite ready to get out. These Gospels are disturbing books. They make a life of composure, comfort, leisure, ease, and especially laziness, look positively disreputable. I hear a certain kind of sermon and then suffer for days because after fifty years of it I have never preached like that. I witness certain men's amazing activity and am covered with shame over my own meager efforts and small achievements. This life of Jesus ought to stir us like that. Only it ought also to encourage us, because always his life is more a promise than a rebuke. What he said and what he did are alive. They walk up and down in our hearts. They stir us and stimulate us so that we can hardly look at our own ministries or at our own souls. But it is the glory of the event of his activity, his total ministry, that it is the only light in which we can look at our own. And this principle forever at work in our ministries redeems them from littleness and destruction.

What is the principle that lies both in the event of his ordinary and his extraordinary activities? Take two words: He "went about doing good." "No man can do these miracles that

thou doest except God be with him." Surely, such words are not intended to apply only once in human life, to be exhausted in one person. These also must be the kind of words that are spirit and life. If the Person of whom they were once spoken continues to be a living Person, the same kind of Person that he was yesterday when they were spoken, and will be to-morrow, then there must be a living principle in them and in the events out of which they arose. Because he lives this principle must live also, and it must live in other lives than his own. One night in a prayer he said to God: "Just as thou has sent me to be thy messenger to the world so I send them to be my messengers to the world." And then a moment later the words that clutch our hearts so we can hardly breathe: "I in them and thou in me." And it all runs into that ministry that you are going to have in some obscure town. Yonder was the event in the land we call holy, here is the principle in all the lands that must be made holy.

What are the principles in those two sentences about Christ? First is the principle of doing good all the time and everywhere, and, second, the principle of doing the kind of things that can be done only by a man in whom God dwells and with whom God is. Of course these are very high principles, but a ministry based upon lower ones can hardly even pretend to be a Christlike ministry. Jesus did not go about doing miracles

all the time; nor did he sit in one place waiting for chances to do good to come to his door; nor, as the manner of some is, did he just go about. That is the one point in which some ministers chiefly resemble the Master. They go about. Jesus was both careful and economical about miracles, but he seemed to be lavish in works of mercy, kindness, and goodness. I wish you would reread the Gospel of Mark, for example, just as a study in going about doing good. Then go and do likewise, keeping the principle alive.

We have approached the miracle question from quite too narrow a view. The real principle that lies for us in those events in Christ's life is the discovery of the moral, spiritual quality of the deeds that a man of God can do, deeds that only a man of God can do. And except in Christ it yet remains to be seen what can be done in the way of doing good by a man of a genuinely Christ-like character. In the light of the ministry of that other Minister our own ministries seem pitiably mediocre in the spiritual quality of our speech and the moral quality of our works. You hardly dare let me read to you in this Pentecostal year certain words of Christ, such as, "The works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." And if the ministry of the church of Christ does not enter in this Pentecostal period more deeply than it has ever done into the spiritual, practical, moral, personal meaning of the ministry of the living Christ, men

will be saying again, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." The world needs to hear again what a man can say when God is with him, and see again the kind of deeds a man can do when, God being with him, he goes about doing good.

3. Do you see what we have come to? We are studying the vital subject of effective preaching. But preaching is not an abstract thing. The problem of the school heads at last into the schoolmaster. The problem of preaching is, finally, the problem of the preacher. Does this principle that we are considering go the whole length? The Master's preaching was an event and a principle. His activities were an event and a principle. Does this philosophy go clear through as the New Testament always does, or have we reached a limit to its application? If we have reached a boundary at which we must stop, we are mocked at the climax of our thinking about this whole matter. We must lower our voices now and speak softly and as in his immediate presence. But we must go on. We could not have got the preaching of Christ except from such a person as Christ. We should never have seen such doing good except by such a person as Christ. Can we now get Christlike preaching or Christlike activity except from Christlike men who preach and go about doing good? Is not he also an event and a principle, a fact of history and experience and a principle for life? Can we run

the full scale of message, work and personality unless we carry our philosophy clear through, even up to these heights? Shall we ever come to our best except by a full understanding, personal application and experience of the words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life?"

There is a tremendous principle that seems to apply here, though it has not often enough or perfectly enough been applied. Readers of Saint Paul will remember how he said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The life that I live I live by faith in him. It sounds like an echo of earlier words: "The works that I do . . . the Father doeth." The Archbishop of York when he was Bishop of Manchester restated the principle in the volume *Christ the Truth.* "Matter only reveals what it is when life supervenes upon it." In other words, a thing shows its own quality, worth, and possibility only when it is caught up by something higher, nobler, something on another level. Matter needs life, life needs purpose, purpose needs redeeming vision and spirit. The human body never showed what it meant until the personality of Jesus lived in one and used it. The ministry of a man will never reveal its possibility, the man in the ministry never show what he may become until what he is is possessed, transformed, revealed by that ministry and the Person whom we are not worthy even to listen to, but whose personal presence within us may make us at last into the same image.

There are words and sentences there in the New Testament bearing upon this phase of our subject that we must face to-day and every day. "To them gave he power to become the sons of God." "Put on Christ." "Have Christ formed in you." "Now are *we* sons of God." What do they all mean except a degree of resemblance, likeness to Christ in all the elements and qualities of human nature, not yet half realized in our ministry as a whole or in any of us? We have not yet tested or discovered the power of the living Christ to reproduce himself in other persons. We have made a doctrine of his person. We test our orthodoxy by our relation to that doctrine. But here in this conference on effective preaching we are not primarily concerned about making doctrines. We are concerned about making a principle of the supreme fact in human history, the fact of Christ. We do not see how we are going to get Christlike preaching unless we get it from Christlike men. I know the doctrinal questions involved here but have neither time nor disposition to go into them. My purpose is other than that. All the while the words of Matthew Arnold have been before me:

> "Was Christ a man like us? Ah! let us see
> If we then, too, can be such men as he."

Thousands of ministers when they are burying the dead, regularly read the prayer of Moses. I read it here for ourselves: "Let the beauty of the

Lord our God be upon us," eager that the divine likeness as seen in that Other Minister may be seen also in us. Many have taken knowledge of us that we have been to Boston or Drew or Garrett or elsewhere; that we have been with Warren or Bowne or others, but not enough have taken knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. We have lacked the Galilæan accent in our speech, we have not done either his works or the greater works and we have not given our modern world a Christlike personality. And yet there he is, in message, activity, and character the one perfect Divine Event in the ministry and the one realest principle for the ministry. In a sense never fully realized Jesus Christ is our sure foundation, and there is no other. He is not alone the foundation of our theology and redemption, he is in deepest sense the foundation of our sacred calling.

(NOTE: I beg to refer to two of my own small books to which this brief address is largely indebted: *In the School of Christ*, the Cole Lectures at Vanderbilt University for 1910; and *Good Ministers of Jesus Christ*, the Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale University for 1917. These are published by The Abingdon Press.)

VII

THE PARADOX OF PREACHING

DOUGLAS HORTON

WHEN the minister steps to the pulpit for the sermon, his waiting congregation desires him above all to demonstrate to them the existence of a good God. The picture Frederick W. H. Myers draws of himself sitting before the sphinx and asking, as his one question, "Is the universe friendly?" fairly describes the attitude of the expectant people—though the minister, on his part, when he begins to speak, will hardly suggest likeness to the sphinx. Even those contemporary theologians who are coy toward the word "God" conceive the preacher's work to be to penetrate to Reality, and conceive it as a worthy work; but that is to say, in Victorian English, that the minister's task is to show that God is, and that God is good.

It is a temptation to stop short of this. It is easier to linger, as the Greek philosopher said, in the porch of the temple where the statues of the gods stand, than to go in to the god. On the porch, indeed, are to be found many pleasing images. One may sit before the æsthetic image, recently come so strangely into influence, and there enjoy the rich languor of liturgical devo-

tion. This is a particular fetish of people of good taste and respectability, who take their religion prosperously. One may stop at the Idea of God. Perhaps this image boasts fewer votaries to-day than yesterday, the Emersonian communion finding the modern palate somewhat limp toward its stern ascetic joy; but for many the idea of God remains still a satisfying likeness of him. One may come upon something attractive, and even exciting, among the statues of the moralities, which seem the veritable personifications of the character of God. Here the more boisterous preacher will imbibe his inspiration, and go out to chide his people for their shortcomings, or laud them for their excellences. Such a man may fully appropriate nine of the Ten Commandments, but what of the most momentous one of all? What of that protasis to all the others, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me . . ."? What of God? One may involve himself in ethics for weeks upon end without so much as an implied appeal to him; and yet every person in the pews knows, even if the man in the pulpit does not, that unless the God who is before all others breaks at some point into the discourse, the whole is but dust on the wind.

To prove that the good God *is*—is this not a confined and narrowing task, one may ask, to impose on a preacher for every sermon at every service? It is no more narrowing than God, no

more confined than his universal goodness. The segment is that part of a circle cut off by a chord, the sector that part which lies between two radii. Both touch the circumference, but the latter reaches in to the center. With the whole universe as his periphery, there is little danger that the preacher will be restricted as to variety of approach: the only peril is that his sermon will be cut to the design of a segment rather than a sector.

But which of us by taking thought can demonstrate Almighty God?

We will at the outset cast aside the possibility of coming to God by any deductive process, for deduction begins at the general and universal and advances to the particular. Such a course of thought is for the preacher's main purpose reversely routed, for God is not God if he be not universal, the premise of all premises. One may begin with him and come to discover wonders in the flower in the crannied wall, and something far more deeply interfused in all of nature, but the opposite argument, from nature to God, is uphill, and needs a different vehicle from that of mere deduction.

And here it is to hand (we hear it said), the modern vehicle of inductive discovery, warranted to carry one from any known particular to every knowable general, neglected by Aristotle, not understood by Bacon, and only in this present

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

day come actually to its own! The overwhelming achievements of Western man are the result of a movement characterized by getting the facts, arranging them, generalizing from them, and verifying the generalizations. We have reached the stage of wisdom in the sciences through a series of irrefutable proofs.

Take, for instance, the development of chemistry. This began, as a true science distinguished from alchemy, with the attempt to explain the arresting phenomenon of combustion. The idea that combustion destroys was not at first doubted: "something is separated from its substance, causing a flame, the incombustible residue being one of the components of the compound destroyed." For a century, we will recall, the existence of the more volatile matter which was separated, that is, phlogiston, was the presupposition of all chemical experiment. Its laws were well known; and similarly the laws of many other substances became, by process of discovery and confirmation, well known. The popular notion was authenticated that water, when heated to a boiling point, was converted into the visible mist called steam. Iron was proved by experiment to resist combustion under all known circumstances. So the science grew. Here were facts upon which one could base general propositions and be sure they were so.

And now the faces of the people look up toward the minister and pathetically ask him for a

proof of the existence and attributes of God as tangible and convincing as the proofs of science. Let us know him as one knows and can isolate the chemical which is separated from a substance when it burns! Let us know he is to all intents and purposes good, as we know that iron is always practically noncombustible! Let us *see* him, as we can see steam!

This is the challenge flung from the pew to the pulpit—and what an agitation and argumentation is set up in the pulpit, to meet it! Time was when the preacher with conclusive gesture could point to his proof-text: did not Gideon put a piece of wool on the ground, with the prayer that in the morning it might be found wet and the ground around it dry—and the next day did he not rise to find the Lord had answered him? This was sufficient evidence for the credulity of another generation, but the method has now passed into the limbo of exhausted superstitions. Its place is not left empty, however. History has become our Bible, and has brought to us no less than an infinity of proof-citations purporting to establish the fact of a providential order. There was the Paris of 1794, for instance, when the Age of Reason was instituted and religion abolished. Here was defiance to the Almighty himself. And what followed? The Reign of Terror, when violence broke like a volcano, and the streets about the guillotine ran with the blood of one thousand five hundred executions in seven

weeks, until the leaders themselves were engulfed in the massacre. God was not mocked. The generalization follows: He never is. It follows the more easily when the preacher and his people are encased, as they commonly are, in a building whose four walls actually shut out much, and psychologically are contrived to shut out all, of the physical and spiritual inclemencies of the world outside. (The gallant early Wesleyans stood on rainy market places to hear the word of God!) And within the church every device is used to magnify the suggestion of divinity. In a crowd, as we know, the normal man tends to let go his own reason and volition and give himself to the impulse of the group. Here soft cushions (the Covenanters took their oath on the rocks of the heath) and Lydian music (the early Baptists preferred, to flute and bourdon, the untrained voices of the believers), dim religious light and central heating (the Pilgrim Fathers came barefoot to churches innocent of painted windows)—these will perform their gentle ministry, and the soul of the worshiper slip, or seem to slip, by suggestion, into the warm bosom of Deity.

Now the God of the real world save us all from believing that this "way of knowledge" will ever lead us to perceive the eternal character of God.

Consider the "laws" of chemistry I have cited. They have already suggested the inevitable drift of our thought. We now, of course, know that

iron possesses no special resistance to combustion. Most of us have seen a steel spring burn brightly and rapidly when heated in oxygen. Every high-school lad knows that steam is no more visible than air, the mist being the result of a second change brought about when, under the action of a cooling temperature, the steam reassumes a watery form. And as for phlogiston, it does not exist and never did exist, for all the handsome corollaries the eighteenth century drew from supposing that it did.

True science from the beginning has been shy of overstatement. She has preferred to set forth her findings as hypotheses rather than laws, and the event has often justified her diffidence. Though my own illustrations have been purposely chosen from hypotheses now known to be erroneous, a cloud of relativity lies over the whole field. The theory of Einstein and the other scientific speculations which to us seem irrefragable, seem no more so than the now discredited presuppositions of our fathers seemed to them. A new element, some new circumstance, may enter in and cheat any law of universality. Hypotheses relatively true, derived from experiments relatively successful, are well enough where only relative progress is demanded. Let us grant that they give us a high degree of probability, but by that phrase they stand condemned for religious uses. We have no interest, our congregations have no zeal, for knowing whether

God is probably good. They want to know, and we must preach, the everlasting-to-everlasting certainty. And, as Kipling luminously remarks, with too much truth for humor, the First Cause has an unscientific distaste for being inquired into.

Too terribly tragic in the lives of many has been this faith based upon generalization from particular events or circumstances. Joseph Parker, to name one who has made himself a classical example by his fearless confession, possessed this type of empirical faith in his earlier days. For years, it will be remembered, he preached in glowing enthusiasm the fact of God—but suddenly an almost impenetrable melancholy descends upon him. His wife has died and his home has been broken up. It was easy enough to believe in God when life ran smoothly and every mental and physical want was met. But there come those circumstances when iron will burn—and God seem to forget his goodness. Anyone can read history to his purpose, and any accepted interpretation of it must be, if not a lie agreed to, at least an uncertainty agreed to. The play of its forces is too various for exact philosophy. There have been the occasions when God has punished the blasphemer, but there come also events like the earthquake at Lisbon, when the pious are engulfed and the atheist is spared—when, as a matter of fact, the atheist seems the only man capable of meeting and assessing expe-

rience. It is not difficult to believe in God when one is locked in a church and his mind locked in contemplation of the good, the true, and the beautiful; but some time he may have to go into a home where, even when the father is at work every day, there is scant enough margin between receipts and expenditures, and when he is not at work, or insufficiently at work, less than no margin at all. What then? Why, then the erstwhile believer may come to understand why some people have to think that sunken chests are more real than God. Then he may begin to feel a new and desperate significance in the terrible slow swing of Kingsley's

> "Men must work, and women must weep,
> And the sooner it's over the sooner to sleep."

Then is the occasion of the abiding question, O God, where are you? Is the universe hung from the tooth of a monster?

It is pure paganism, it is simply the Greek enjoyment of life, to accept God as being good when one is well and strong, when bodily vitality and comfort "prove" him so. But the question every congregation will eventually ask is how to believe in him when the bright day is done and we are for the dark.

The way of searching for knowledge which I have outlined is adhered to by many Protestants. It is, on the other hand, hardly conceivable that a genuine Roman Catholic would hold that he

knew God primarily by experiment and proof. Experiment is a Protestant virtue, which has been startlingly successful in the realm where absolute knowledge is not essential: it has given us a Protestant civilization. But the attempt to apply this method of search to God can hardly be called fruitful.

On the contrary, the Catholic will call it positively deleterious. By adopting it a man matriculates for unbelief. The Catholic's way of knowing God is different. "I know," says he, "for my knowledge comes to me from the very highest authority."

The library shelves groan under the weight of volumes written on the subject of the authority of the church, but their huge contents are well distilled into the few homely illustrations and comments found on the pages of a modern popularizer of the faith.

If you wish to have your appendix removed, he asks, do you as a matter of practical fact secure from the medical library all the books you can read on anatomy and surgery? Do you philosophize as to the possible function of the appendix in the economy of the human body? Do you inquire why its vitality should be so low as to make it peculiarly susceptible to disorder? You do nothing of the sort. You know enough to go to a good surgeon and trust him to be possessed of sufficient first-hand experience and native skill to remove the offending member.

By knowing someone who knows, you have widened the circle of your wisdom, and though you know nothing directly about appendices, you know more than the man who, knowing a little, does not turn to the expert; because indirectly you have made the expert's knowledge your own.

Similarly, if some person should burn your house down, you would not trouble to master the law of arson: you would simply turn the matter over to the proper authorities to handle. So in all the departments of life: we are a wiser society because we have learned to a degree to trust one another in the field in which each has made himself expert.

The rest of the argument is logic itself. You will be wise to trust the church in the realm in which she has been at home for centuries. As Mr. Chesterton puts it, the church is the only institution surviving to-day which saw the world under the domination of paganism. She knows the pagan soul, and what it comes to—and she knows the Christian. When she tells a believer his soul is safe, why should he not rely on her as implicitly as he relies on the medical profession when he is told by one of the number that his heart is in good condition? That were the way of wisdom. Then, with the authority of men wiser than yourself, you could assert your knowledge of God boldly.

I have called this the Catholic way, but that

it is also the way of very many Protestants must be evident to all. We have faith in the faith of others. It is a workable way, and easy to conform to. We take it almost unconsciously in respect of a gracious personality. Like the saint of a city under interdict, who carried under his cloak a model of his city when he went to receive the papal blessing, and so got for it what was intended for himself alone, such a person woos from us an acceptance of his beliefs as well as of himself.

But if it be ultimate and unassailable truth one is seeking, how can he be content with this? Even in the realm of medicine or of the law no wise doctor has ever lived who pronounced himself omniscient. It is a happy social makeshift whereby we trust ourselves to each other, but we do so not because the expert is wholly certain of avoiding mistakes, but merely because he is less likely than other people to make them. Has every disease diagnosed as appendicitis proved to be appendicitis? Has every legal process taken the course foreseen by the lawyer?

Now, if there is no expert so perfectly qualified in the law as to be able to visualize justice, and none in medicine so wise as never to have erred in applying a remedy, how shall we hope to find that person or that church whose knowledge is perfect in the difficult sphere of the spirit, where there is nothing so tangible as the body nor so rigid as law? The Catholic idea, as a matter of

fact, is simply the Protestant idea pushed back one remove, but not essentially different. They both founder on the same rock: if God cannot be proved by you and me, no more can he have been proved by our fathers.

The stage is set again for tragedy to sensitive spirits. Father Tyrrell as a young man writes from within the bosom of the church, while still in his novitiate in the Society of Jesus—writes as a lark sings, bathed in the blue of happiness. But the later years are those of a mind not far from the Slough of Despond. He has been reading church history: he has been making the acquaintance of certain ecclesiastical contemporaries. He has lost his authority: it has become sterile; he no longer knows because he knows his church does not know. He has learned what Martin Luther, John Calvin, George Fox, John Wesley, and other men of insight have known—that one cannot be more trustful of men than God is. And God has not placed the soul of any person in the custody of any other. The man on his knees in prayer knows he is not a guarded creature: he is a solitary creature. The praying man is, in fact, so far as human contacts are concerned, the most awfully solitary figure in the universe. When he calls on God, no man or church can answer to him for God. He is alone on the edge of chaos and old night. No minister can lay the hand of God in his—and yet, that is the minister's one task!

This is the paradox of preaching, that the minister must try to give that lonely soul a hold on the Eternal, with proof that his hands can handle and his eyes see—but such a hold with such a proof is precisely what he may not give him. He must, and he may not. He cannot for his congregation in any way create the Creator: he is not the purveyor of Godhead. Yet if he fails to make the Presence known, he is not a minister. What, then, is he?

He is the Victim. The days of animal oblation and steaming altars may be gone, but unless the drama of the sacrifice is somewhere maintained in our worship of to-day, evolution has played us false and left a lacuna in our relation to reality. It is thought by some that the place of sacrifice has been taken by the offering of money. No other thought could better illustrate how meagerly the full content of the ancient rite is now understood. That part of sacrifice which is the deed of man may undoubtedly be duplicated by any act of disinterested giving; but what gave the old practice its supernatural fascination was not man's action, but God's—not what the priests did, but what God did: see *him* lick up the flesh with the tongues of the fire, see *him* drink the blood into the ground, see *him* inhale the vapors into the sky, and smell the sweet savor! Our God is a consuming fire. That God was alive: He accepted the sacrifice in person.

To-day the danger is that God will not, because

he is not permitted to, *act* during the whole service of our worship. Why need he? Why need he be more than passive if the minister can deftly draw him forth by demonstration? The contemporary school of theology which conceives religion to be "man's advancing conquest of the universe" obviously thinks of the universe, for all its much speaking about its vastness, as a kind of oyster. What of the universe's advancing conquest of man? The ultimate realities do not seem to have changed so much under the influence of man as man has changed under the influence of the ultimate realities. In a word, if it is a religion and not a magic which we wish to exemplify, we shall necessarily leave room for the action of God; and, specifically, in preaching, our only hope lies in his action rather than in our own.

Now, it is just this action which the minister who knows himself to be the victim of the Perfect One permits. He will not be consumed with fire, but he will none the less be consumed, and with an element infinitely more powerful than fire. Most historians would agree, I think, that desire has been a force more terrible for humanity than fire. The great conflagration of London in 1666 was as nothing, in terms of results, compared to the flame which burned a century earlier in Edinburgh in the heart of John Knox. "Lord, give me Scotland or I die!" was a cry not from a man who had God in his grip, but from a man

in the grip of God. The medium has changed: it is no longer open fire upon an altar, it is human personality—but unless that personality *burns*, burns with a desire to know and make known the perfection of God, unless the mind burns with a truth over which in a real sense it has no control, the act of God does not take place.

That consuming truth of God is not such as can be tripped off the ministerial tongue as a right little hypothesis or a tight little demonstration. It is not *a* truth; it is Truth, and can therefore best be represented in our dialectic-dealing minds in the form of paradox. I must: I may not. So the God-held personality conceives his task.

Must—it is a final word for the preacher. Unless he knows he must believe and must bring his people to believe, what is he but an impostor? The servant of the Most High is aware of a divine demand upon him which is more fundamental than the demand for life itself.

Now, the demand for life is fairly fundamental. Witness the swimmer brought ashore with too much water in his lungs, struggling for air. That gasping! One cannot forget it if he has seen and heard it. It is at such a time that the onlooker of skeptical turn of mind is neither of great help nor great consequence. To tell the man that there is no such thing as air, or that it is uncertain if he will ever again breathe it—could any more absurd ineptitude be imagined? To that man in

his desperation there is just one desideratum in the world—air, air! Deeper than any knowledge of the brain is his knowledge that he is made to breathe air, that he is what he is by virtue of the air. At such a time science also is relegated to its true position: do but tell the man that before he breathes you will make a test to see if there be air enough there for him! But there is something that comes before science: there is the life-necessity, air. Or, if you will, be Catholic as well as scientific: tell him you have made the test: he may breathe the air: he is authorized to do so! Attempt, rather, to stop him; let the whole crowd of spectators attempt to stop him; let the whole human race attempt to stop him. Air! His whole organism is adjusted to it: it has made him what he is. A necessity deeper than instinct teaches him it is there to be breathed and teaches him to crave it. The profoundest part of his physical personality is involved.

In a similar manner, the minister, if he is to be God's mediator, must know his own and his people's need. That need is not for air, not for anything inanimate like air, nor, like air, impersonal. Here is an involvement of more than the physical personality: the whole mind, the whole will, is called upon. And preaching is thereby saved from being simply a part of the Sunday-morning routine. At its prophetic best it is an experience of crisis. It is a standing on a last promontory and knowing there is no hope

but God. Not until he has been Out There is the minister prepared to preach. Not until then will he be able truly to evaluate the words of the skeptic. "There is no God? My friend (he will say to the scoffer) you do not know how artificial and careless your statement is. Why does my whole being quiver at thought of him? To state it dogmatically that he does not, or uncertainly that he may not, exist, is simply ludicrous. From him I came; to him I am purposed; I cannot deny him." He will meet the words of the Catholic friend similarly: Let the church take care of the matter of God for me? My friend, the church cannot do that; this is more immediate to me than breathing. And as for the words of the Protestant—if you cannot be convinced by the tests of the fathers, make your own test whether there be any God or not—he now has his answer ready. My friend, your experiments are interesting, but beside the point. I know I am made for God; I cannot escape the thought of him. I must live for him and preach for him. The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? Said another,

> "I didn't want to do it, for I knew what I should get . . .
> But the Word of the Lord were lain on me
> *An' I done what I was set.*"

So must I.

May not—it is another final word for the preacher, the other member of the paradox. The analogy of the drowning man's need for air is

patently inadequate in this connection, for the reason already suggested: it is inadequate in the degree that God is more than air! The fact that the preacher is involved in a necessity waits for its significance upon a definition of that necessity. What or who was it that lighted that burning fire in his bones? What or who is it that the soul desires more fiercely than life? We call him simply the Perfect Being—but in that very description the failure of his ministers is foretold. The drowning swimmer, while consciousness lasts, may still hope to be able to inhale air, and exhale it, for air is something a man is made to command; but what man will hope to take in and give out the viewless winds attending on the motions and mysteries of the Perfect One?

If such a God were proved or demonstrated by any man, he would not be such a God. He cannot be made to depend on proof or demonstration, since he is that guaranty that the universe is rational on which all proof and demonstration themselves depend. His is the rectitude by which all life is measured. His is the ageless truth presupposed by every syllogism. His is the faithfulness of the universal fabric in which all experiment is grounded. He taketh up both deduction and induction as a very little thing. The thought of him is the premise of all thinking but the conclusion of none.

Translated into the broader terms of human relations, this means that God will not be *brought*

into the economy of earthly existence. That he comes of himself is another idea. But his ministers will not bring him. And this is their tragedy.

"This is the doom of those . . .
To feel in the dark
The wall insurmountable,
To hear beyond hearing the song that shall never be heard,
To see beyond seeing the picture that shall not be painted:
To sense forever
In wind and water,
In wood and meadow,
In city and solitude,
More than the heart can hold or the mind encompass.
This is our doom . . .
To seek forever and find not the Rood and the Rose,
The Lips and the Grail that beckon us."[1]

It is this inextinguishable sense of God's *may not* —as well as of his *must*—which authenticates a man for preaching. If the cardinal sins of the ministry are pride, dogmatism, and dullness, here is a timely remedy. For only the man who feels a need for a God who transcends all things—even his own power of expressing him—will be morally humble, intellectually teachable, and in technique engaging. That man will not, as Ruskin would say, disgust his congregation by dining on the Host. On the contrary, the runic note in his entreaty, arising from the felt mystery of the ineffably Perfect One, will make his thought piquant and covetable.

But the *may not* is none the less tragic. There

[1] Shaemas O'Sheel, in *Jealous of Dead Leaves*, Horace Liveright, publisher. Used by permission.

before you, of a Sunday, sits a man made desperate by his own unbelief, sits a girl who is almost visibly marked for struggle and defeat, sits a young man who, being morally undernourished, lacks the strength to fight a good fight. They look toward you with the wistfulness of those about to die. Their one hope is that you have for them the Word that will save them. If you do not say it, no other man will say it. You are aware that you are in a position to prove yourself their physician or their executioner.

> "Then with a rush the intolerable craving
> Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call—
> O to save these! to perish for their saving,
> Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

O for that Word!—the word to enfranchise them from imminent catastrophe! But as you preach to them, it is written that you *may not* know whether they find in you life or death. It is God alone who giveth life.

Together the inexorable *must* and the acknowledged *may not* constitute a personality through which God may act. They are the two arms of a cross: to stretch oneself upon them is to endure a form of crucifixion, but it is only through crucifixion that grace finds entrance into the world. Only the man on whom a necessity is laid to preach the fact of God, but who may not do so because God is God, is qualified with that combination of eager responsiveness and realistic acceptance of creaturehood to be an instrument

in the hands of God. Or, as Paul might suggest, it is only the minister who is able to partake of the crucifixion of Christ whom God uses to reveal himself.

"Whenever there is silence around me, by day or by night, I am startled by the cry, 'Take me down from the Cross!'
The first time I heard it, I went out and searched: till I found a man in the throes of crucifixion;
And I said, 'I will take you down': and I tried to take the nails out of his feet.
But he said, 'Let be. . . .'
And I said, 'But I cannot bear your cry: what can I do?'
And he said, 'Go about the world telling everyone you meet, "There is a man upon the Cross!"'
I go about the world, telling all the rich, and all the happy and all the comfortable: 'There is a man upon the Cross!'
But they all say: 'We are sure you are mistaken; there was a man upon the Cross two thousand years ago: but he died and was taken down and was decently buried;
And a miracle happened, so that he rose again and ascended into heaven: and is happy for evermore.'
Still I go about the world saying; 'There is a man upon the Cross!' "[2]

The preacher must search till he finds that man at his Best is on the cross. This he may discover by apprehending that he himself, at his best, is on the cross. When he can say, "I must, but I may not!"—then God may.

[2] Elizabeth Gibson Cheyne.

VIII

THE ART OF PREACHING

DANIEL L. MARSH

THERE is an art of preaching as truly as there is of music, or sculpture, or painting. A musician works with tone, a sculptor with form, a painter with color. A preacher's medium of expression is the sermon.

The function of art is always the same, in whatever realm it operates: "to teach us *to see;* to teach us *what* to see; to teach us *to see more than we see.*" The man who has mastered the art of preaching will have such skill in applying truth to mind that his congregation will see the invisible in the visible, the permanent in the transient, the eternal in the temporal.

The great preachers from the time of the Hebrew prophets to our own day have seen situations and events more with insight than with sight, and they have been masters of the art of preaching just in proportion as they have been able to hold the truth against the light on different levels in such way as to make others see things in true perspective—to see that which is little as little, and that which is big as big.

I have often felt that there must be certain principles common to all true art at its best; but

I never found a satisfactory statement of the principles of any art which could be applied to all high art until last summer. I was in Athens studying the ruins of "the glory that was Greece." While there I read an essay on "The Lamps of Greek Art," by Percy Gardner, Professor of classical archæology in the University of Oxford. Reminiscent of Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Professor Gardner wrote of "the lamps of Greek Art, lamps which give us light and serve to show our way. I find in Greek art," he says, "eight notable features: (1) Humanism, (2) Simplicity, (3) Balance and Measure, (4) Naturalism, (5) Idealism, (6) Patience, (7) Joy, (8) Fellowship."

Those features do not tell the whole story of any art, but I believe they will be found in all true art anywhere. They certainly are found in the sculpture and architecture of Greece's golden age, but no more so than in her poetry and oratory; no more so than in the art of the Middle Ages; no more so than in the productions of our New England poets in the nineteenth century; no more so than in the work of Jesus and his apostles in the first century. So also we may test our mastery of the art of preaching by these same principles.

1. *Humanism.* Protagoras of Abdera is credited with the saying, "Man is the measure of all things." While the doctrine is capable of being both misunderstood and caricatured, yet it is

profoundly true. Everything is humanized by the Greek artists. Their gods absorb the qualities of the most perfect manhood. Zeus, the father of gods and of men, combines the dignity and justice of the king with the benevolence and kindness of the best father. The notable features of the landscape take on themselves human shape.

At a certain point in the Buddhist ritual the candidate for initiation is asked, "Art thou a human being?" That question might properly be asked of the young man entering the gospel ministry. Those who have been able to win a response from men and women in any great way have been persons who could say in all truthfulness, "Nothing that is human is alien to me." "How," asks Carlyle in his Essay on Burns, "How does the poet speak to men with power but by being still more a man than they?" That explains the power of all great poets from David of Judæa to Riley of Indiana. Nothing human is foreign to them. They describe relations of men, emotions of men, yearnings of men, beliefs of men, that are common to the race. The tears in their verse are for the common heartaches of humanity. Their humor has the common chuckle of humanity in it.

The preacher likewise must have a passion for humanity. He must, as Bishop Quayle used to put it, love folks. He will read books and revel in the glories of nature, but he will find men

and women and children more interesting than books and more majestic than mountains.

This passion for humanity will determine largely the preacher's emphasis. It will throw things into their proper relations. Human rights will be more important than any other rights. The master of the art of preaching will proclaim anew Christ's doctrine of the essential equality of individual human rights and the sacredness of personality. He knows that human slavery was overthrown, not because it was an economic evil, but because it was a sin against human personality. He knows likewise that war is doomed because it sins against the sacredness of personality. To one who has this point of view service is the only standard of greatness. Love is the motive of life. Faith in God and in humanity is the goad and the spur and the push of his ministry. The preacher's passion for humanity is born of his passion for Christ.

2. *Simplicity.* The Greek artist saw clearly what he desired to produce, and set about it without hesitation and without self-consciousness. Greek artists sank themselves out of sight. It is said that once Protogenes painted a picture of a satyr, and then as a mere triviality, he painted a picture of a partridge down in the corner of his canvas. He noted that spectators were so impressed by the lifelikeness of the partridge that they gave to it more attention than to the satyr. Then Protogenes painted out the

partridge in order that it might not detract from the central figure of his painting.

Absence of self-consciousness is one of the most sovereign traits of a fine character. The art of preaching, to be fine art, must be characterized by this straightforward simplicity as much as the art of sculpturing or the art of painting. I have often been deeply impressed by the simplicity of truly great preachers. There are persons who think that anything that is simple and easily understood is not profound and has not required much work. They often imagine that anything that is abstruse and involved and difficult to be understood is the product of great labor and profound thought. But did you ever stop to think that when you cannot see to the bottom of a stream, it is not necessarily because it is so deep: maybe it is just muddy! It requires far more work and far more brains to express a profound truth simply than to enshroud it in the vagueness of high-sounding phrases.

He who would be a good minister of Jesus Christ must master the magic secret of preaching: simplicity! He must not strut, nor pose, nor assume artificial tones, nor affect sesquipedalianism! Simplicity in the preacher is one of the best outward signs of his sincerity of heart and sincerity of purpose. The preacher should see clearly the true objectives of preaching, and without hesitation or self-consciousness aim at the fulfillment of those objectives.

3. *Balance and Measure.* The work of the old Greek artists impresses one with their recognition of limit and law. The form of the temple, once it was decided upon, remained fixed. Each part had a definite function which it accomplished in the simplest and clearest way. The pillars were made to support, and their shape and slight decoration were in accordance with that purpose. The walls were made not to support, but to inclose the statue of the deity. The whole building became a home for the deity with as much regard to measure and balance as a beehive is constructed as a home for bees.

This same principle of balance and measure is beautifully illustrated in the Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, which was found at Sidon, but which is now on exhibition in the museum at Constantinople. The first impression you gain by looking at the carved side of that Sarcophagus is a mass of figures; but when you study it, you find that in the center a horseman emerges as though from the background, and on either side of that central horseman there is perfect balance, the Persians on one side and the Greeks on the other. You can get a better idea of one of Alexander the Great's battles by studying that Sarcophagus than by visiting a battlefield.

It is well for the preacher to learn early in his career that "order is heaven's first law." What is the use of preaching if the sermon is not understood? How can a person grasp and retain the

meaning of the sermon unless there be some orderly development in it? But not only should the sermon itself have a regard for measure and balance, but the whole work of the preacher must be properly balanced. A man who harps on one string all the time becomes a bore, if not a nuisance. The preacher, of all people, must "see life steadily and see it whole." The effective preacher will translate rhythm, balance, and symmetry of sculpture into the spirit of discipline and self-control in his preaching and in the complex relationships of all his ministry.

4. *Naturalism.* The Greek artists were shrewd and meticulous observers. They used to go where the young men of their day were playing games and running races, and they noted the physical forms of the finest athletes, and from that loving study of nature they produced the works of art that made their names immortal.

Preaching also, if it is good preaching, must be characterized by naturalism. The preacher himself must be natural. "What you are," said Emerson, "speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say." That does not mean that the preacher is to live on the lowest level of the life of his community. But it does mean that a preacher when living loftily should be living naturally. His passion for humanity must be matched by his passion for reality. If you change the word "poetry" to "preaching" in one of James Whitcomb Riley's simple Hoosier dialect

verses, you will have this doctrine just about right:

"Talkin' o' poetry—There're few men yit
'At's got the stuff b'iled down so's it'll pour
Out sorgum-like, and keeps a year and more
Jes' sweeter ever' time you tackle it!
Why, all the jinglin' truck 'at hes been writ
Fer twenty year and better is so pore
You cain't find no sap in it any more
'N you'd find juice in puff-balls!—*and I'd quit!*
What people wants is facts, I apperhend;
And naked Natur is the thing to give
Your writin' bottom, eh? And I contend
'At honest work is allus bound to live.
Now them's my views; 'cause you kin recommend
Sich poetry as that from end to end." [1]

5. *Idealism.* The history of Greek art, according to Professor Gardner, is the history of a search for beauty, poetry, whatever can charm and delight. The work of the Greek artists, even in material form, is an illustration of the predominance of thought over things, of man over nature, of the ideal element in art.

The preacher who loses his ideals is lost indeed. Is not this the ground of Paul's fear: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." When he said that he kept his body under, he meant that he kept his soul on top. His anxiety lest he become

[1] From The Biographical Edition of the Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley, copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

a castaway after having preached to others was based upon his fear of losing his ideals amid the stern realities of life. A preacher must maintain his ideals, especially so in this day of confused and shallow thinking.

> "Alas for him who never sees
> The stars shine through his cypress trees;
> Who hath not learned in hours of faith
> The truth to sense and flesh unknown:
> That life is ever lord of death,
> And love can never lose its own."

6. *Patience.* All great artists, and especially Greek artists, have been marked by patience—an utterly ungrudging expenditure of time and care, which reminds one of nature herself. It is said that Protogenes spent seven years on a single picture. Without doubt, he would have spent longer than that on it if he had felt that he could have made it better by more work.

He who would master the art of preaching must strive after perfection. We sometimes smile to-day at the questions John Wesley phrased for Methodist preachers, but they are not yet outworn by overuse. One of those questions was, "Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?" The next question is germane to the point I am discussing. It is, "Are you earnestly striving after it?" If a man does not possess patience, he would better stay out of the preaching business. William Pitt said that patience was the most important qualification for a prime

minister. The late Charles W. Eliot, of Harvard, said that patience was the most essential qualification of a university president. It certainly is a no less important qualification of a minister.

Patience has two aspects. On the one hand it means an uncomplaining endurance of wrongs and misfortunes, and on the other hand it means a bull-dogged tenacity in labor or application. The man who does not have a calm and poised spirit, who does not imperturbably and uncomplainingly hang on to the task set before him, has no business in the ministry. The master of the art of preaching can never be satisfied with mediocrity. He must strive after perfection. It is well to learn early in this profession that excellence never lies this side of drudgery.

7. *Joy.* If the artist in material things finds joy in his work, and if the artist in words feels with Keats that "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," how much more ought a preacher to feel what the French call the "*joie de vivre*"—the very joy of life. Saint Paul once was writing a letter to one of his friends when he himself was a prisoner. As he wrote, the chain that bound him to the soldier at his side clanked at his wrist, and yet he wrote to his friend, "Rejoice!" And then as though he thought his friend might not understand, he said, "And again I say, rejoice." His word of joy rings out like a bell buoy on a wild and wintry ocean shore. What other art is so filled with joy as the art of preaching?

8. *Fellowship.* One of the most striking features of Greek art was its fellowship. The tourist who looks at the connected series of statues and reliefs on the Parthenon wonders how one man could ever have made them all. But no one man made them all. They are the joint production of a number of sculptors. It seemed to be the practice in that far-off day for sculptors and builders to work without blue prints and without bosses. A man became first a stonemason, fashioning the stones so that they would lie without mortar through unnumbered centuries. If he became skillful as a stonemason, then he began to carve statues and reliefs. There is extant yet a payroll of a number of persons who worked upon the temple to Athena, and each sculptor was paid sixty drachmas for his statue. It is impossible to tell where the work of one man ends and another's begins; but you can tell where the work of one school ends and another begins. The schools of artists were characterized by wonderful fellowship.

It is even so in the art of preaching. Sometimes it is possible to distinguish the product of a particular theological school. The careful observer will note how the school is characterized by its morale, its *esprit de corps.* The product will be distinguished by its practical idealism, or its open-mindedness, or its courage, or by all of these.

If this is true of the product of some particular school of theology, how much more true it is of

the whole profession of the ministry! Anyone who has ever attended a conference of Methodist preachers must have been deeply touched with the way the preachers opened their conference by singing Charles Wesley's hymn:

"And are we yet alive,
And see each other's face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give,
For his redeeming grace."

And with what a depth of feeling they sing the closing hymn:

"When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again."

In the heart of the master of the art of preaching there is no room for jealousy or spitefulness, for deceit or trickery, for self-seeking or disregard of the rights of others.

This high art is marked by fellowship—fellowship with one another and fellowship with God. Preachers have always felt themselves to be workers together with God. Preachers more than any others say among themselves, "Our fellowship is in heaven." It is preachers who teach their congregation to believe in "the communion of saints."

Such, as I conceive it, is the art of preaching. I was for six years secretary of a cabinet appointing ministers annually to their work—a cabinet presided over by one of the greatest preachers of

this generation, Bishop Francis J. McConnell. That secretaryship gave me an unusual opportunity to learn what kind of preachers were wanted or not wanted by the different churches. Now, as president of Boston University, I stand in a detached coign of vantage which gives a still better opportunity to observe the work of preachers of many different denominations. I give it to you as my deliberate judgment that preaching is a high art, and that the foregoing eight features will characterize it when at its best.

I do not mean to say that the foregoing eight features by any manner of means exhaust the subject. But I do hope that the world may be able to detect these features, among others, in the preaching of the young men who go out from Boston University School of Theology. It is to make better preachers of these young men that these Conferences on Preaching are held.

For the Conferences both of last year and of this, we are indebted chiefly to the vision and executive ability of G. Bromley Oxnam, formerly professor of preaching and pastoral science in Boston University, now president of DePauw University. Our thanks are due to him not only, but also to the other distinguished "Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," who in their addresses at these Conferences are making valuable contribution to the art of preaching—an art than which none is finer, or subtler, or more expansive.

IX

THE PREACHER: HIS PASSION AND PLAN

DANIEL A. POLING

WHEN I first became acquainted with my father he was supporting a family of nine children on four hundred dollars a year—when he was fortunate enough to receive his salary! His three sons have followed him into the ministry.

Recently when a Rutgers Junior came to discuss with me the question of his own life decision, came asking, "Shall I be a preacher?" I replied, "If you can satisfy your mind and heart elsewhere, no; but this is the greatest business of all."

I am of the opinion that to be successful in the pastorate to-day—and without invidious comparison, after both pastoral and secretarial experience, I place the pastorate first—I am of the opinion that to be successful in the pastorate to-day a man must be so possessed by his "call" that it is indeed "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel."

Years ago I went with a Methodist minister to the spot in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where a little boy was converted, converted at an old-fashioned altar—a little boy who was the only "result"

from an old-fashioned revival meeting. Nor was he a prepossessing youth—his forehead hurried away too rapidly from his eyebrows. Small wonder that when he came to his pastor, saying, "I believe that God has called me to preach the gospel," that pastor should have tried to persuade him to stay on the farm. But the little boy was not satisfied. He went away shaking his head. Later he came to the presiding elder with the same statement, "I believe that God has called me to preach the gospel," and the presiding elder, taking his cue from the minister in charge, told the boy that God needed Christian farmers. But still the boy was not satisfied. God had called him to preach the gospel, and I doubt whether the Methodist Church, or any other church, will have another Bishop Simpson!

Write into the heart of this passionate preacher *evangelism*, for it is first. We discuss the new world, and we do well; but there can be no new world without new-world builders, and men become new only in and through Jesus Christ. Evangelism is not all; evangelism is not enough; but evangelism, with all that it represents, is the beginning. Here the church faces her unique opportunity; here she has no competition; here, whatever the adaptation of the Message to meet new occasions, she goes forward in harmony with the spiritual plan of the ages.

Christianity is different because of the gospel,

the good news; and the gospel comprehends just this—the winning of men and women and little children to Jesus Christ, sustaining and strengthening them in the Christian life, training and releasing them for Christian service. Again and again I find this program vindicated in the returns realized on evangelistic investment under the most extreme of modern social conditions. The returns themselves strikingly vindicate the claim that Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

One evening after the invitation had been extended at the close of the sermon, a man of distinguished appearance presented himself at the altar of the Marble Collegiate Church and was introduced by one of our young men. He had raised his hand in response to the evangelistic invitation. With cynicism in his voice he said, "What can you do for me?"

"Nothing," I replied, "absolutely nothing, but I can take you to One who will answer your question."

During the week we met twice in the church study. At the close of the second interview the man arose from his knees with a lighted face. His first words were a question. The question was not intended as a rebuke. It was spoken in apparent surprise, and out of a grateful heart.

"How does it happen," he asked, "that—because I made a promise, I have been going to church at least once every week—until last Sun-

day night I was never invited to come to the foot of the cross?"

That question is still ringing in my ears.

Our simple evangelistic program is based upon the principle that the supreme business of the church is leading men and women to Jesus Christ. Let it be mentioned in passing—mentioned, I say, since there is no time for an extended statement—that this evangelistic emphasis is blood-brother to a program of social service. One of the most effective social survey and settlement workers in New York City is a brilliant individual who stood at the close of a Sunday-evening service to express a desire to become personally acquainted with Jesus Christ.

An average of seven hundred business girls and women pass through our parlors every Tuesday for luncheon together and a series of fifteen-minute inspirational and religious addresses. There are self-help classes of various kinds, special lectures, and social gatherings.

But to build the new world we must have first new-world builders. If our modern civilization is learning anything to-day, surely it is learning that redemption is more than an intellectual interpretation; sin, more than a name; the atonement, more than a theory; and Jesus, as the Christ, more than a myth. No new world can there be without new-world builders, and only Jesus Christ can make new creatures out of men.

But it is the very simple story of a very small

beginning in congregational evangelism on Fifth Avenue that I am speaking about. I do not hesitate to tell the story, for it is a very modest story as to results, and one that may be told without the presumption that might attach to more distinguished achievements.

For some years now it has been our invariable custom, at the close of the Sunday evening service, to extend an evangelistic invitation. With one exception, through this period there have been definite responses to every such invitation. The number has varied from three to above thirty. The invitation itself is based upon three assumptions: (1) That in every congregation there are men and women who need and desire God. (2) That God's Spirit is always active. (3) That the least we should do is to make it possible for those who need him to meet "the One who is able." The method is simple. Following the sermon, whatever its theme, a member of the choir sings a gospel hymn. The audience is requested to bow in prayer and the announcement is made that if there are those present who have burdens of any sort for which they would seek Christ's strength, or sin from which they would ask his release, they make themselves known by standing or by lifting their hands. All such are assured that they will be remembered in the closing prayer preceding the benediction. Never more than three minutes is consumed in making and completing the invitation. The principle in-

volved is what may be termed "the line of least resistance." It has been written that "God is hard," and certainly Christianity is not made more attractive by stripping it of stern qualities and manly virtues:

> "The Son of God goes forth to war,
> A kingly crown to gain,"

is forever the recruiting challenge of the Church of Jesus Christ. Why, then, this so-called "line of least resistance" program in evangelism? It is true that such a policy makes it quite possible for a "hardened sinner" to raise his hand beside a saintly woman who, in her sorrow, prays for comfort. And I have seen a profligate make his first appeal for mercy behind a weeping widow's gown of bereavement.

But Nicodemus, who came to Jesus in the night under cover of the darkness, was not rebuffed. The Master Teacher, who is our leader both in preaching and practice, made it easy, very easy, for timid people to take their first steps toward him. Often he went with them before he called them to him. He braved the criticism of churchmen and rulers when he sat at the table of Zacchæus. We constantly find him adapting his words to the circumstances, the social environment, the intellectual level of inquirers. Nicodemus was the only man to whom he said, "Ye must be born again." Yes, Nicodemus was the only one to whom he said it, though no one ever

fully finds him who does not enter into the experience. To Peter and others like him, he said simply, "Follow me." Masterful in its simplicity is the way of Jesus with men, and we make no mistake in following him.

The plans for a "follow-through," though unobtrusive, have been measurably effective. Forty "posts" for personal workers have been designated. Each personal worker occupies his "post" at every service, or supplies a substitute. The personal workers' group, made up generally of Christian Endeavorers, has a chairman and a secretary and meets for consultation and prayer following the mid-week service. Always those who stand or raise their hands are cordially greeted following the benediction and invited to meet one of the ministers or any other members of the staff. As a rule—and the rule is seldom if ever departed from—a personal worker does nothing more than extend this perfectly natural invitation. This policy enables us to use effectually many naturally timid young people. It also avoids the disaster of embarrassing those who do not wish to be questioned or conversed with personally. Very recently one of our less-experienced personal workers introduced to me a former war officer of the American Expeditionary Force who had raised his hand in the closing period of the service. The young worker, who would have felt himself quite unable to hold any sort of conversation with the gentleman, in

a perfectly natural and easy manner gave me an opportunity to have a conference with him.

One out of three such invitations brings a favorable response. Interviews are arranged to suit the convenience of the individual. In every instance an earnest effort is made to follow the case through to a decision.

The Marble Collegiate Church is a "downtown" church with all the peculiar and baffling "downtown" problems. A comparatively small number of those who lift their hands or stand in these services unite with the local church. They come from all sections of the country and world, and many of them are related by correspondence to churches in other cities. Even so, many are received into the fellowship of the Marble Collegiate Church congregation. Also it should not be overlooked that the invitation extended is a general one and that the problems entered into are not confined to those individuals who are seeking Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Through one period of the winter an old-fashioned "Sing" is conducted in the parlors of the church following the close of the evening service. People stand and sing familiar hymns while the ministers and their associates move about informally. There is never an address and the benediction is pronounced absolutely on time!

During the six weeks preceding Easter, on what is called "Marble Collegiate Family Night," a class for our personal workers, or a special Bible

Class is conducted. Each personal worker signs a simple declaration of purpose and keeps a card, a duplicate of which is in the hands of the pastor. On this card are entered the names of those in whom the personal worker is especially interested and for whom daily definite prayers are offered.

How entirely apart from the personality and message of the minister the value of this evangelistic invitation may be, we have seen demonstrated repeatedly. On one occasion, following a citizenship address to a special audience, the temptation was strong to depart from the customary practice. However, the invitation was extended. More than thirty responded.

Would I follow this plan in the Sunday-morning services? Yes. The nature of the invitation fits in naturally with any program. It contributes to the life and spirit of a morning as well as of an evening service, and the time involved eliminates the last possible objection. For some time I have made it the rule to close every sermon, anywhere, with an invitation of this sort—Lenten lecture, Y. M. C. A. meeting, mass meeting, noonday talk to working girls—and why not? Who knows when there may be someone present needing an immediate opportunity to get into touch with the Great Friend and Physician? Indeed, we find that under circumstances of every sort and in every circumstance of public Christian assemblage, there are men and women who need to meet without delay "the One who is able."

Beginning several years ago with a series of talks by a missionary expert in street speaking, we instituted an open-air pulpit at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street—at the noon hour one of the most congested corners in New York City. These meetings were held daily, Saturdays and Sundays excepted. On Sunday evening, preceding the regular service, the minister spoke out of doors for ten minutes. The Young People's Society adjourning early gave the nucleus of a congregation and supplied the singing. Later the plan was perfected and the program enlarged. An attractive platform was built in the arch of the doorway facing the street and avenue. In co-operation with the Greater New York Federation of Churches, services were conducted daily until November 1st. Brief sermons were preached by thirty-five of the ministers of New York, representing all denominations.

As a rule, the same speaker appeared for an entire week. Leading soloists of the Marble Collegiate Church and other prominent vocalists sang gospel hymns and a talented trumpeter played. Speakers and musicians wore the academic gown. We found that the use of the gown at once distinguished these services in a city of many street meetings and gave to their message a touch of impressiveness and a note of power. During the first six months of the outdoor meetings more than thirty thousand people were in attendance, in addition to those who moved to

and fro on the street, and more than eight thousand copies of the Scriptures—in Yiddish, Italian and English—were given to those who asked for them, a daily average of more than sixty. The announcement was always made that the little books were available, but a careless general distribution was avoided.

The message of the outdoor pulpit is constructive, evangelical, patriotic and noncontroversial. From the lips of New York's outstanding preachers and most talented musicians, the Good News of Jesus is told daily to an increasing number of people. As was said in the opening service of the campaign, "If with our message here we shall send a careless Hebrew to his synagogue, an indifferent Catholic to his cathedral, or a neglectful Protestant to his church, and if we shall make better citizens, we shall be glad. We shall trust the Spirit of God to complete and perfect the work we have begun."

When one contemplates the vast and growing, the appalling spiritual problems of New York City, so small a thing as we are doing does not warrant a pretentious setting. But it is my earnest hope that all churches shall on every possible occasion open the way for those in need to meet "the One who is able," and I feel too as I have said that the very modesty of our success, with the simplicity of its plan, will be an encouragement to others.

Let me give two living illustrations:

At the close of a Sunday service, among those who were introduced to the minister by the personal workers was a young man who did not give his name. He stated positively that he did not desire an interview, said that he had been attending the services for three months, that several times he had raised his hand for prayer but had always refused to wait for the introduction at the close. Now he merely wished me to know that he felt the need of being remembered in a special way. Two weeks later this young man came forward again and asked for an interview. We met on the next afternoon. I told him, as is my custom, that he need give me no information concerning himself, that I was entirely at his command, but that, of course, my ability to help him would be largely determined by his willingness to trust me. He did not give me his name.

Two weeks later we met again, and now the story was told: He had been in the flying service during the Great War under another flag than ours, was shot down and terribly burned. Scars cover his body. As a result, very largely of physical and nervous demoralization, the after-war period was for him a virtual inferno. His family is a leading family; his father, a distinguished citizen of his own country. The boy came into the great "Light," was soundly changed. Until removing from New York he remained one of our most faithful attendants. One Christmas Sunday evening I found myself standing face to

face with his father and mother, and only those who have lived to experience such an hour can know what the meeting meant to us all.

"Take a chance!" a young profligate said as, through bleary, boyish eyes, he looked at me. The Sunday-evening service had closed only a few minutes before. Perhaps a dozen men and women had stood to request an interest in the closing prayer. One of the officials of the church had brought to me a young man soaked to the skin—the night was a downpour—and brazenly drunk. He wanted money, and his story was utterly impossible. He told me that he was a son of wealthy Southern parents; that he had gotten into trouble in New York City and lost his money; that his baggage was being held at a prominent hotel for an unpaid bill; and finally that a representative of his family would meet him at the Waldorf Astoria on Tuesday afternoon and "fix things up." He needed fifteen dollars to meet his immediate necessities and would repay me—"sure!"

I knew that he was lying, and my friend had started him for the side entrance when he blurted out, "Take a chance!" What it was that prompted me to give that miserable boy another look I do not know—perhaps the omnipotence of a mother's prayer—but I did look at him again. A New York preacher is deceived so often, and by those who tell much more ingenious stories than this lad had told, that the disgust with which the official of the church received my request to ad-

vance him fifteen dollars, and charge the same to my personal account, was entirely warranted.

The young fellow went squashing out, half-sobered by my parting word. "I'll take a chance," I said, "as wild a chance as any gambler ever took for gold. I'll take the chance; but, oh boy, for the sake of many another needy fellow who will come to this church for help, as well as for your own, make good, play the man!"

Let me be perfectly frank. Not every story that begins as this one does ends in a return and a remittance. But the boy from the South came back, came back clean and polished, came back with fifteen dollars and to take me to the Waldorf Astoria, where I met a gracious Southern lady, who stood there in the stead of the boy's invalid mother to thank the old Fifth Avenue church that had gambled with the sin of the city for the soul of her son—gambled and won.

Finally, let me conclude this thoroughly informal talk by describing for you three ways out of the ministry. Two of these ways I heard first from the lips of the man whose hands rested upon my head with ordination solemnity, Bishop H. B. Hartzler, for years the beloved chaplain of the Northfield Schools.

The first way is the way of dishonorable discharge. Few—thank God for that!—few ever take it. We do not indict all bankers when one banker defaults. The fact that the morally delinquent clergyman is an exception to the rule

makes him a front-page story. God knows that preachers are not all they should be; that they face the temptations that all men know, and that, for some, these temptations are thrice-heated. God knows too that the preacher as no other man must when he "thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But after taking account of all the sad stories that have been poured into my ears, after remembering all the pulpit failures and the few pulpit moral delinquents my life has touched, I thank God that I have never known an Elmer Gantry.

The second way is the way of honorable discharge. Certainly it is possible for a man to miss his calling—a good man, a Spirit-filled man, a man eagerly anxious to know God's will for his life. Certainly it is possible for such a man to make a mistake. Such men have made mistakes. I have known a few of these. One of them in particular is now at the head of a great business enterprise in the Middle West. With his money and with his life, he means more to the program of his denomination and to Christ's cause in his community than he ever could have meant behind the sacred desk. Aye, and let us not overlook those who step aside because of family circumstances over which they have no control, or who fall, as others have dropped on the field of action, physically incapacitated. I know no sadder sight than the picture of the devotee, the ardent evangelist, who could no longer

speak above a whisper, but whose eyes still carried the "light that never shone on land or sea."

Yes, there is the way of honorable discharge with many paths leading to it; but at last there is the ever higher climbing road that takes the preacher to his coronation—the road we hope to press when "meeting days are done."

It was a college associate of my father's, whom a fatal malady stopped in the middle years before his prime, who lunged out from his pillows and with a marshaling of mind under the hand of an iron will, said to those who stood about his dying bed, "Preach on! Preach on! Preach on!"

Go preach the kingdom is at hand,
The King is at the gate.
Go tell the News to every land—
He comes for whom all wait.

He comes with lightnings and in wrath;
He follows down the sea;
He sweeps the barriers from his path
To set the captives free.

He comes with laughter in his eyes
Soft as the yellow dews.
And hungry children hush their cries
To shout the glad Good News.

He comes, he comes with healing balm
For all the hurts of men.
He comes, he comes with peace and calm
Where all the wars have been.

Sound, bugle, sound in golden flood
His reign that shall not cease.
He comes to make of all one blood—
Triumphant Prince of Peace.

X

THE ESSENTIAL METHOD OF PREACHING

CHARLES R. BROWN

WE are holding a conference on preaching! How is the thing done? What is really going on when some man is actually "preaching the gospel"?

How would you define the method of preaching?

We cannot do better perhaps than to take the words of one of Boston's noblest preachers. When Phillips Brooks gave the Lyman Beecher lectures on preaching at Yale many years ago, he said, "Preaching is the communication of religious truth through personality." God so loved the world that he gave us the good news of redemption in the person of his Son. His Son so loved the world that he came down, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and gave himself for us. And this personal method, Jesus said, was to be permanent and universal. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." The whole way between the highest form of divine help and the farthest reach of human need was to be bridged by consecrated flesh and blood. Truth through personality!

The sermon, therefore, is a personal message, not in the frivolous, hackneyed sense in which that term is so commonly tossed off. From all those old ladies of both sexes and of varying ages, who come hurrying up to the minister at the close of the service, with a sanctimonious smile on their faces, to say in glib fashion, "Enjoyed your message!" "Wonderful message this morning!" —from all that good Lord deliver us!

But in sober truth the real sermon is genuinely a message from Somebody to somebody. The preacher is just the herald who bears the message, not in his hands—sermons, like the true temples where God dwelleth, are not made with hands, neither are they delivered by men's hands, as though they needed any such wild display of gesture. The real sermon which is a message, from Someone to someone, comes, therefore, not just across the man's lips or by way of some man's head. The substance of it has been actually wrought into the man's heart and soul as an inward experience of things both lawful and appropriate to be uttered. You can see at once what a vital process preaching is—it is indeed, as the lecturer said, the communication of truth through personality.

There are some things which a man can do and do acceptably whether his heart is in his work or not. He can sell groceries or turn the grindstone or break rock in the street in a mood of almost complete indifference. He can give lec-

tures on the higher mathematics or on physiological chemistry and do it well (if he knows about those subjects) even though he feels no more personal concern regarding the materials in his lecture than do those other men about their groceries or their grindstones or the rock pile. No man can preach in that mood of emotional and spiritual detachment. He might be able to lecture on theology or to furnish his readers with a carefully selected stock of biblical data or to hurl at them a lot of noisy, fervent and futile exhortation. But that is not preaching. Preaching is a vital process; it is the communication of religious truth through a religious personality which is there functioning before our eyes, on the very highest levels it knows anything about.

For that reason no one can ever read a sermon. You cannot print a sermon. All you can do is to print the words the preacher used. But the sermon itself must be heard, seen, felt, experienced. That which the preacher is experiencing, even as he utters it, must be taken up by all the finer faculties of those who are present, sharing in that high exercise, and thus become a part of their deeper experience. The words the preacher uses, forceful and fitting though they may be, are only a very small part of it. His face, his bearing, his voice, his feeling of sympathy, his aspiration on behalf of all those hearers, his trust in the One who has inspired the whole performance—all these factors are operating stead-

ily upon the religious sensibilities of the congregation.

The function of the preacher, therefore, is always a transmissive function. In his modest way he is like that Other Minister who said to the Father, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." In him the Word, that eternal word which was in the beginning with God and which was God—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace." The truth of God found its way into human experience through the person of Christ. His function was a transmissive function. And his ministers in turn stand midway between the central power house and all the various forms and levels of human need. In no vulgar, flippant sense, but in sober truth, they are "live wires," receiving, transmitting, delivering that which means light and warmth and power to those who wait upon this ministry of help.

This very fact conditions the mental operations of preachers. They are not likely to go down to the sea in ships and do business in the great waters of creative scholarship. Taking them by and large, they have not the time, the strength, nor the necessary equipment. They are in the retail trade. The man at the "A. & P." or the "Economy Grocery" does not produce all those provisions—flour, sugar, cereals, fruit, vegetables and what not—which he dispenses. Other men have labored and he has entered into the product

of their labors. Now he arranges it and brings it attractively and acceptably within the reach of the hunger of the community.

In like manner all the prophets have had their visions for us; all the poets have dreamed and have sung for us; the scientists have uncovered the hidden glories of the great natural order which enfolds us; the historians have brought out the meaning and the teaching of the centuries which have gone; the painstaking biblical scholars have aided us in rightly dividing the word of truth, as workmen who need not be ashamed, discriminating between the local and the universal, the passing and the permanent, the incidental and the essential, in this body of truth. Into all this rich inheritance we are privileged to enter. Preachers are naturally and inevitably enormous readers. They eat up, not five-foot shelves of books, but fifty-foot and one-hundred-foot shelves. They seize upon all those volumes, not to steal what is there but to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the best that they find there until they shall have gained mass, weight, reach and vigor adequate for transmitting messages of help to all their hearers.

This fact differentiates preaching from other forms of communication. When you read some man's book, you get his words, his ideas, his argument. But his look, his tone, his feeling, his personal atmosphere—at all these you can only guess. When you see some great artist's picture

on canvas, you see form, color, grouping, composition. How much more it would mean if you could see him actually doing it! In the Dresden Gallery you enter a certain room and find there just one picture. It is the Sistine Madonna. The only other object in the room is a bust of Raphael facing the picture, as if he too had entered (in some mystic fashion) to enjoy his own work and to interpret it to the group of tourists who stand with him on that side of the room, having traveled half way around the globe perhaps, to see that one canvas. Suppose Raphael were there, actually painting the picture and telling you by the very motions of his hand, by the expression on his face, and by the light in his eyes just what he meant to say on that particular canvas! Raphael is not there, but the preacher is always there when he undertakes to paint the image of Christ upon the lives of his hearers.

When you listen to some man's words in the phonograph or by radio, you do hear the man's voice. You hear it usually in a certain solution, more or less strong according to the weather, of static and of squeak. But you are not hearing him. He is not there. If a parrot or a well-trained chimpanzee could be taught to repeat all the words in the Sermon on the Mount with perfect accuracy and with a Boston accent, you would not hear that sermon which astonished an outdoor congregation and moved them to say: "We never heard it on this fashion. He spake

not as the Scribes but as one having authority." What does a parrot or a chimpanzee or the disc on a victrola or a copper wire feel and know about those words which are Spirit and life! Speaking with authority demands first-hand knowledge gained by the profounder experiences of human life. Impression must always precede and condition expression.

Suppose that David Livingstone had carefully written out his views of the Christian religion, and had had them printed and bound in a well-gotten up volume, and then had shipped ten carloads of those books to Africa to be distributed judiciously along the Zambesi River, where the natives would have easy access to them! Suppose that he had painted a picture of a perfect Christian gentleman, such a man as he would have had those untaught people emulate, and had hung that picture in village after village where the people could look upon it! Suppose that he had put twenty of his best sermons into records and had sent them out with a generous consignment of the latest Orthophonic Victrolas—had there been such things in his day! What would have been the result of these efforts? As the servant of Elijah said, when he was sent out seven times to look for rain, "Nothing doing! Nothing doing!" There would not have appeared in that pitiless blue sky even a cloud of Christian influence the size of a man's hand. Livingstone also, like his Master of old, took upon himself the

form of a servant and went in person. The words of Eternal Life were made flesh in him also and he was to those needy people the gospel of the Son of God in Africa. Truth through personality—there is no other way!

Here is a man preaching! If he really is, you hear him, you see him, you feel him. You breathe that atmosphere—and there are a lot of other precious ingredients in it besides oxygen and nitrogen—which he creates. It is an atmosphere in which it is easy to ask and receive, to seek and to find Him, to knock until you feel doors opening around you into a world unseen!

All the strength and richness, all the warmth and tenderness, all the deep and real devotion of the man's nature are operating. The whole man is functioning on the very highest levels known to human experience. There is a certain contagion of spiritual influence steadily emanating from him which infects all the people present, unless it be those who show themselves sinfully—not to say damnably—immune. You cannot send that sort of thing by mail, or through the printing press, or along a copper wire.

It is this fact which makes your job and mine, as preachers of the gospel, safe and permanent. Nobody else is working at it in the sense that I have indicated here. If preaching were merely the reading of a series of dainty little moral essays, it would not be so. There are any number of writers who can beat you at that. They

are polishing up and rubbing down their style while you are out making parish calls or keeping all the wheels oiled and turning in the Sunday school and the Epworth League, in the Ladies' Aid Society and the Men's Club. You cannot run races with the essayists and not come out second best.

If preaching were just a lot of words and gestures, a fine array of make-believe and play acting, a sort of pious entertainment, there are gifted men and women on the stage, with all the properties of well-appointed theaters at their command, who can beat you all hollow at that. If preaching were nothing more than the noisy output of thoughtless exhortation, there are men in other walks of life whose throats and lungs and easily aroused fervor are far more gripping than yours—they may at any time rob you of your congregation. But if preaching is the communication of religious truth through a personality which is actually experiencing that truth, then and there as he declares it, we know beyond a peradventure that this cannot be done by any contraption of gold or silver or copper graven and welded by art and man's device. It has to be done by the warm, immediate, direct touch of life upon life.

The whole man preaches—body, brain, heart and soul; nothing can be left out of the account. It is not just a question of lips and lungs; it is not just the task of getting a certain amount of

pious talk out of one's mouth, or a given supply of theological ideas out of his system. A man's personality takes in all the states in his union and all the lesser territories and all the outlying island possessions which now and then seem to have cut loose from the mainland of homiletic performance. They all count, for or against the spiritual effectiveness of his preaching.

For that reason it becomes a part of his consecration to keep the whole apparatus in prime condition. In telephoning, even a small grain of dust in the wrong place will interfere with the electric contacts of those delicate membranes which receive and transmit the sound waves of one's voice. The grain of dust becomes master of the situation—it can easily make it impossible for you to talk with your friend in San Francisco or in London or for him to hear your familiar accents as he might. The whole mechanism of communication must be in good working order.

In like manner, all that is within you must be in condition to bless His holy name if you are to preach effectively. If through your preaching those hearers are to find forgiveness and healing and redemption, if their needs are to be satisfied with good things, so that their strength will be renewed, you must be all there and at your best. Personality—it takes in all that there is of us! You will prepare a great many sermons. Alexander McKenzie, of Cambridge, once said that he had been busy for the last forty years doing

just one thing—"getting ready for next Sunday." But all the while, for your two-score years of preaching (or, if by reason of strength, they be two score years and ten) you will be doing that more fundamental thing—you will be preparing a man, a man who can take the truth of God and preach it with power.

Health and bodily vigor for a preacher is not a mere matter of physical prudence or the keeping of oneself physically fit for the joys of life. The man who needlessly allows himself to become below par in health interferes with his transmissive function. He clogs the current. The man who slips easily into chronic indigestion, into a state of nervous fretfulness, into a succession of colds and sore throats, is blocking the divine purpose. The word of the Lord does not have anything like a fair chance to "run and be glorified" on that particular field which he presents for its activities. When that message of help to that mass of spiritual need starts upon its way through him, its progress is hindered. A body sound, clean, vigorous, and as far as may be (within necessary limits of course) one that people can look at with some measure of comfort, is a prime requisite for the man who would convey spiritual truth through his own person.

The avoidance of all those habits and excesses which make the body weak or repulsive, the weeding out of offensive physical mannerisms, facial grimaces, awkwardness in posture and in

gesture; the stern repression of all those motions and attitudes which suggest feebleness—all this, for a man who is there to transmit the truth of God to people hungry for help, becomes a matter of conscience and consecration. "For their sakes," he says, "I undertake to sanctify myself, body, brain, and spirit."

The gaining and the retaining of a good speaking voice is just as much a part of the preacher's duty as the saying of his prayers. A voice that is naturally and steadily resonant will have sufficient carrying power to enable a preacher to be heard readily in almost any church. I do not mean "a loud speaker," a megaphone of a man—God forbid!—men are not heard for their much yelling. Nine tenths of our preaching had best be done in a conversational tone and the resonant voice will make such utterance audible.

A voice that is flexible, responding easily and instantly to one's changing moods and modes of appeal, pulling out its own varied stops like a skilled organist at the keyboard! A voice which is not flat, thin, shrill, rasping, harsh, but a pleasant voice for people to listen to Sunday after Sunday! Some men, not many, are born with such voices; most of us have to achieve them. Fifteen minutes a day, every day in the year for a few years, spent on vocal exercises, suggested by some competent teacher of public speaking who understands the art of expression, will give any man who is not organically deformed a good

speaking voice. If he is not willing to pay that modest price for it, he is not worthy of the ministry. He had best be saying to himself, "This voice of mine is to utter His truth—it cannot be made too good for that high office."

For a minister of Christ to become ailing and complaining, a perpetual object of sympathy and pity, seems like a denial of the completeness of his own Christian manhood. He may well aspire to the honor of furnishing his people a standing illustration of what can be done by honest living, by right thinking, by a robust faith and by the wise utilization of mental and spiritual forces in the gaining and maintaining of sound health. Most of the great preachers—not all of them, but most of them—have had, as they went on, rousing stomachs, splendid lungs, nervous poise, and resilient strength. Matthew Simpson, Charles H. Spurgeon, Henry Ward Beecher, Phillips Brooks, Dwight L. Moody, George A. Gordon—how strong they were! When they stood up, they looked like chosen vessels, worthy and able to bear the heavenly treasure of a divine gospel.

The brain has a clear right to demand that it be kept habitually at its best to receive and transmit those truths which have in them the tang of life! One's mental processes are intimately bound up with his physical condition. The man whose liver is out of order and whose stomach is forever declaring a strike or a boycott, is likely to believe in and to preach, and, alas! to practice,

the doctrine of total depravity. He will be scolding his people for their shortcomings—which are many, God knows, in all of us—when he would better be wooing them to lives of aspiration. A brain well fed with rich red blood flowing up from a forceful body through a neck free from all constrictions outer or inner—when the Lord has a chance to speak into a brain like that, with a whole company of people listening in at the other end of the line, you may be sure that he does not keep silence!

A mind positive, virile, masculine, from its habit of dealing with things fundamental! A mind open, sympathetic, and eager to be of use! A mind honest and accurate in all its ways, rejoicing in a close fit between statement and fact, scorning all loose assertion and wild exaggeration, all rant and tall talk as unworthy of the vocation to which it is called! A mind orderly and systematic in its methods, putting first things first and the things subordinate in their proper stations. A mind well stored and well trained by those disciplines to which it is steadily subjected and royally unselfish in its readiness to share with others the highest it sees and knows! The man who makes it his business to have a mind like that will add cubits to his stature as a transmitter of saving truths.

And then at the very climax of that perpetual process of preparation, a heart within kept clean, kindly, modest, unselfish, sensitive to the softest

touch of the divine breath. The Lord of Life still comes through closed doors into the upper room and there breathes upon his disciples, saying to them as of old, "Peace be unto you! . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

It is possible by divine grace for a man so to live that the veil between him and the world of spiritual reality becomes thin. There is no sense of any separating barrier between him and the Most High. He feels ever the impact of that Infinite Spirit, who is above all and through all and in us all, upon his own finite spirit in a manner which is altogether real and mighty for good.

What a high calling of God is this task of ours as ministers of Christ! I can hear a voice at this hour saying to us all, "I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies, brains and hearts, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, for this is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to *this* quality of life, be transformed to *that*, by the renewing of your minds that ye may prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God."

Your best sermons will always come right up out of the depths of your own inner life. You will not get them by saying to yourself on some fair Tuesday morning: "Go to now! I will prepare for next Sunday one of my very best sermons. It shall be what the men at the Rotary Club would call 'one of my greatest efforts.'"

Neither the kingdom of God nor the best type of preaching comes by observation. You will never find those best sermons by saying "Lo, here! or Lo, there!" They are born from within, born from above by the direct action of that Unseen Spirit who goeth where he listeth.

Some profound spiritual experience through which you have just passed—the sharing of some awful sorrow in the home of those who are dear to you; the fighting afresh of some battle with temptation side by side with some struggling soul for whom you would give account; the hard task of carrying on in the face of some onslaught of doubt and discouragement in the depths of your own soul; the shouldering of some heavy burden which seemed too grievous to be borne, until you went into the sanctuary of God—any one of these will induct a man into those profounder experiences of spiritual reality out of which comes the best sort of preaching. Truth through personal contacts with the eternal verities—it is the only way—and it is the one thing which gives that note of reality and certitude which makes preaching effective.

Sermons which are garbled, compiled, huddled together out of a lot of miscellaneous material, always have a kind of second-hand, warmed-over, hearsay flavor about them. The sermons which live and move and enter into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God, will be the sermons which are taken most largely out

of your own interiors. The sermons which find their way into the hearts of men, causing them to mount up with wings like eagles and to walk the way of duty without growing weary, are bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, the children of your own mental labor and the output of your own generative energy. It is worth the devotion of a lifetime to be able to preach even a few of those real sermons.

The minister of Christ is not there in his pulpit to recite some lesson which he may have learned out of a book. He is not there to perform a few clever religious antics which he has carefully and diligently rehearsed in private. He is there to impart spiritual life. His sermon has grown up and taken shape by virtue of those inner experiences which he counts the best part of his own life. When he preaches on faith, it is the utterance of a man who has put his own faith to the test on a score of hard fields. When he preaches on hope, he does it as a man who is saved by hope. When he preaches on love, he does it out of a heart controlled by love for God and living daily in its practice of love for men. When he preaches on reconciliation to God and of spiritual renewal, he does it as a man who has himself found peace with the Most High and newness of life springing from that sense of an august fellowship. Here are the hidings of any preacher's power!

I began this lecture with the words of one of

our noblest American preachers. Let me close it with that same majestic figure standing again before us as he stood for many years yonder in Trinity Church! When I was a student here in the School of Theology at Boston University, it was my good fortune to hear Phillips Brooks preach almost every Sunday for three years. His sermons were filled with sensible, scriptural, helpful ideas. He was at home in the world's great literature. His diction had in it always dignity and grace.

Even so, those who never heard him preach do not as a rule find his published sermons attractive. His delivery of them had in it none of the studied, prearranged tricks of the professional elocutionist. He never tried for one moment to be what the thoughtless world calls "a pulpit orator." His utterance was so rapid that the words came pouring out at the rate of two hundred words or more a minute. But it was wonderful preaching! I can feel the tingle and the inspiration of it yet, even though it will be thirty-seven years ago next January since he died.

The power of his uttered sermon lay in the fact that there before our eyes, as we sat and listened, was a great, beautiful soul. He was a man of God, a lover of his fellows, a benign, sympathetic spirit, reaching out to every one of us a hand of help, that he might lift us up.

It was truth finding its way out and up through the medium of a radiant personality. "Deep

calleth unto deep." The best that was in him was calling out to the best there was in us. He was bringing up from those profounder sources of motive and stimulus the new impulses which led us to put away the sins which so easily beset us, and sent us out to run the race set before us with a finer and a firmer purpose.

XI

THE MINISTRY—ITS DIFFICULTIES AND COMPENSATIONS

JOHN W. LANGDALE

OUR foundation is that Jesus proclaimed the gospel of salvation to all who will accept. Upon all who do accept he placed his constraint of love to bring God to men, that men may be brought to God and society to brotherhood.

By the sacrifices of their fellow Christians ministers are freed from the daily struggle for bread and butter necessities, that they may spend themselves in promoting the gospel. As heads of brokerage houses have confided to me that they have never known a clergyman who mixed in the markets who in their judgment ministered to the full measure of his ability, I have been reminded that we are expected to devote our undivided purpose and attention to further the gospel.

The ministry, as thus conceived, is an occupation imperial enough to appeal to the ablest, ideal enough to compel the noblest to exclaim with indispensable humility, "Who for these things is sufficient?"

The greatest man I have known was the late President Eliot, of Harvard. Francis G. Pea-

body and George H. Palmer have said he was the greatest man they had known because he showed them the way to rely perpetually upon the Eternal for personal strength. President Eliot liked to tell of his son Sam, who in early manhood exhibited business capacity, and who was offered by an old friend of his a position with the railroad company of which he was the president. After reflection the younger Eliot declined, explaining that he planned to study for the ministry.

"The ministry!" ejaculated his would-be benefactor. "I thought a talented fellow like you, Sam, would go in for something real."

"My son did go in for something real," commented President Eliot, "the realest thing in the world—religion, which is the heart of ethical development, which is the only real progress open to mankind."

The minister who would represent Jesus should be or should become a Christian gentleman trained for leadership. Personality is more important in the ministry than in any other occupation. Some disclosure of a speaker's religious experience as verified by his personality is one of the distinctions between a sermon and an address.

It should go without saying that a minister should be a Christian. That supplies the accent of certainty for which people listen and long. Ultimately they cannot be led farther into fellowship with God than the preacher has gone. Men

innately stronger than a minister follow him if he manifests that he seeks to be divinely led. One of the riddles the brilliant pulpiteer can never understand is the deeper and more influential ministry exercised by another of stumbling and prosaic speech but of a radiant, heaven-suggesting personality which makes religion appear desirable.

By a gentleman I mean, of course, a man of honor and of courtesy to every sort of folk. Boorishness is no more evidence of genuineness than is snobbishness of superiority.

A Christian gentleman trained for leadership, I suggested. The unlettered may have spiritual understanding and tactful ability to guide others into the mysteries of grace, but in a minister no amount of fervency can substitute for skillful faculties. The rapidly rising standards of education require that a minister have at least a scholar's love of truth and a capacity for straight thinking. Only such instructed strength can save men from the professionalism that is despised, from the slothfulness that besieges those who command their own time, from the wilt of discouragement before a challenge of conscience that should be championed steadily, from the narrowness that can make a one-ideaed man as dangerous as a ruffian.

Pastors nowadays must have many qualifications, expertness in any one of which would be sufficient to establish a reputation in most em-

ployments. One of these is administrative capacity. Pastors frequently protest against becoming managers of plants instead of prophets of religion. One often quotes the complaint of Lowell that to be a poet and a diplomat is as if a setting hen should be required to answer the door bell. Administration, however, cannot be as wholesalely stigmatized. Doctor Hu asserts that the asceticism and the mysticism of the Orient, which have been favorably contrasted with our superactivity, are a confession of defeat. They are a retreat to the imaginary as a refuge from the famine, disease, and sudden death inflicted by untamed nature. Far higher is the attack of intelligence and spirituality upon the material, that superstition, ignorance, and misery may be much subdued. Some of the new emphasis on administration arises from an enterprise that would carry Christian activity beyond the conventional to effectiveness.

In any event most of us cannot avoid administrative responsibility. It is the first consideration that confronts us when we arrive at our parishes. A minister must know how to administer his time so as to meet his public obligations and yet have opportunity for reading and reflection. He must know how to administer a service of worship, now that it is no longer regarded as merely the portico to a sermon, and since with increasing culture people are not satisfied to have all the time taken by one voice but

want to express their own adoration and to have an opportunity to listen to God.

Again, the minister must know how to administer a school of religious education in a day when ideas are changing, old ideals are losing their authority, and the technique of instruction is highly elaborated. The activities of an enlarging number of parish houses will contribute toward the building of character only if the minister has administrative ability to direct them toward an emphasis on primary values.

To meet these manifold responsibilities, some ministers so exhaust themselves in devising and maintaining a detailed system that no energy is left to use the results the system is intended to produce. A minister succeeds as an administrator in proportion as he develops rapidity of concentration after interruption and as he trains his membership to carry out that for which he unfolds the vision and arouses the devotion.

I welcome the claim of Karl Barth that the prime function of the ministry is preaching. I am not dogmatic about it, but as in medicine some general practice is an advantage before specialization, so it seems to me that every ecclesiastical executive should have the preliminary experience of a pastor-preacher.

With many, I deplore the enormous waste of preparing sermons to be delivered to little groups of people when they could be addressed more consequentially to bigger congregations. I recog-

nize too that the larger churches which Christian unity is to bring will call for a more diversified ministry than has prevailed in Protestantism. Some are called to be apostles, others prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and I would not grade my brothers who are equally earnest about making their aptitude register for the Kingdom.

For three reasons I think that preaching is primary. It is the part of the preacher's duties which laymen are least able to perform. It must interpret for the masses a faith which under the influence of the Holy Spirit is ever developing. It affords scope for the most varied qualifications.

The preacher who has intellectual capabilities and sympathies can assist those who are teased by doubt, by expressing truth in timely and winsome terms. The preacher who has the mystic's insight into the invisible can unveil the Infinite for many whose outlook is clouded by a materialism which no arguments can dissolve. The preacher of a practical mind who can always discern other duties to be done after every short-lived enthusiasm, can minister to some types of people better than anyone else.

Of course, by preaching I mean preaching. Essentially, my preaching is my testimony of the love of God which I have experienced in Jesus Christ. Sermons, however, are not created as the student made his essay on Chinese metaphysics, by combining a digest of what he found in the encyclopedias under China and metaphysics.

Sermons are incubated in prolonged periods of painstaking preparation of mind and soul, which periods are the medium through which come convincing presentations of eternal truth. Under well-known psychological laws a sermon will occasionally burst into being, but Josephus Daniels had reason for saying, "When a minister announces, 'I am going to preach to you out of my heart,' I take it as an excuse for insufficient preparation and expect a vegetarian discourse."

Doctor Jowett could say with Dante that he never used a word for sound, but always to express an idea, because he toiled upon his sermons unremittingly from Monday morning until Saturday night, oftentimes from six in the morning until bedtime. Doctor Fosdick declares he would never again attempt to produce two sermons a week, and, indeed, if by Wednesday morning he has not found a theme upon which he wants to preach, he turns to the "barrel," for he cannot prepare a sermon in the time that remains. In his younger days Doctor Cadman allowed himself only three or four hours of sleep, and among other disciplines wrote out every word of "Paradise Lost" to enrich his vocabulary for the pulpit. Edmund Gosse said of an easy-going writer (Leigh Hunt) that he did not know the values of the jelly bag. Effective preachers do know the virtue of persistent straining, and the product is a clear discourse which instructs the mind, stirs the emotions, and arouses the conscience.

Ordinarily, the preacher and the pastor should be the same individual. Here and there a preacher in a here-and-there place can be absorbed in his pulpit and yet escape a remoteness from daily life which nullifies preaching. Generally, he who attempts it answers to Wells' description of Henry James—he opens no healing waters of thought but invites his votaries to bathe in his sweat and rejoice.

On the other hand, he who is absorbed in the pastorate, who does not definitize his calls by holding before him what he would accomplish, fritters away his own time and that of his people in the small talk of social calls and so degenerates toward an amiable retailer of platitudes from the pulpit until from him worth-while people want no calls.

I was astounded to hear Doctor Fosdick remark that he measures the merits of a sermon by the number of doors it opens to him into other people's lives. Perhaps we too can measure the value of our pastoral efforts by the number who come to realize the need of public allegiance to Jesus Christ and loyalty to some church.

We cannot too soon discover this intimate and vital reciprocity between the pulpit and the pastorate. To a minister who has the heart and the ability and the willingness to deal with individuals, people will tell those secret things that usually are whispered alone to God, and in the telling find comfort, cheer, and courage. From

seeing the gospel operate in people's lives, the preacher will gain a fresh confidence, which will give a grip to his voice and continuance to his enthusiasm. The preacher will be guarded from preaching about his own bookish difficulties and guided toward the real needs of his people, not because he is thinking less of what he says, but more of those he is saying it to and still more of Him in whose name he speaks. The preacher will acquire a congregation sympathetically ready to receive his message, under Aristotle's law of oratory—"Your power over your hearers will depend upon what your hearers think of you." Is it not significant that the highest contributions America has made to theology, with the notable exceptions of Professor Bowne and a few others, have come from the humanized thinking of pastors rather than from professional teachers of religion?

The experience of the average minister is a constant disinclination to leave his study to make calls and about as constant a gratification that he has gone to what he had misthought of as the routine drudgery of ringing doorbells, but which he had discovered to be the enrichment of his own life and the lives of others.

Consider some specific difficulties of the ministry.

It is frequently alleged that influential members constrain a minister to preach as they desire. That difficulty is much exaggerated. Usu-

ally, our advertising martyrs have excited opposition by some one-ideaed hobby rather than by any self-styled fearlessness in declaring the gospel. Most of us are more endangered by eulogistic palaver than demeaned by any expectation of sycophancy. When anyone attempts to browbeat us into compromise, our official boards stand by us almost to a man.

The material limitations which relatively small salaries impose upon the families of ministers are more of a difficulty. We are always in need of money for books and travel to make us more efficient. We want wives of culture who may not be able to maintain a parsonage without the domestic assistance we cannot afford. We crave for our children the education that is becoming ever more expensive.

Another difficulty is a tantalizing inappreciation of the toilsomeness of the ministry. To be sure, most occupations appear easy to outsiders. Heads of business corporations seem to have short hours in palatial offices, but you notice they carry fat portfolios home with them. Macaulay reads as though he had dashed off his paragraphs, though of him it was said he read twenty books to write a sentence and traveled a hundred miles to compose a descriptive line. The sharing of joy in one hour and of sorrow in another, the effort to straighten out troubles, the labor of preparation and the strain of frequent speaking can make the ministry the most exacting of occu-

pations. Yet an old college friend once asked me how I put in my time during the week. After I have exhausted my nerve centers in preaching, people often remark, "You had a happy time this morning." Most folks suppose the ministry to be the most sheltered and leisurely of careers.

Another difficulty inheres in the intangible results of a minister's labors. The lawyer has his court decisions, the physician the recoveries of his patients, the teacher the graduation of his students, the merchant the demand for his goods, but the minister can see little outcome of all he tries to do. People congratulate him on his fine sermon when what he wants to know is how it will affect their lives. Many appear not to listen, any impression seems speedily to disappear; what is left is taken casually and not as the issue of eternal life.

Another difficulty is the danger of falling into egotism. Because we stand alone to speak with no one to question our deliverances, we may come to assume that we are infallible. We flourish on the hospitality that is extended to us, but chiefly as the ministers of God. We become so accustomed to hearing our praises that we fail to perceive the silence of the more discriminating.

A baffling difficulty is the impossibility of ministering acceptably to every type in a congregation. People choose their church home for other reasons than the character of its pulpit, and consequently some of them are no happier in their

relation to their minister than he is to them. In the congregation of a minister of scholarly attainments there are always some who would prefer a lightsome fellow, who talks on town topics, laughs with the ladies, slaps the men on the back, and jollies the young people. A disheartened young minister declared his intention of seeking a professorial chair. "My people," he explained, "have become bewitched by a new neighboring sensationalist who confuses flippancy with wit, impudence with courage." Fortunately, a college chair did not open and soon his people began to come back, utterly weary of buncombe.

The most depressing difficulty of the ministry is the sense of inadequacy. I am not worthy to represent the cause of Christ. I cannot do all that should be done; what I do should be better done—such are the regrets that continually shadow a sincere minister. A distinguished business man remarked that after a week in business he went to church with two flat tires and came away with three. If that were the minister's fault, how heavy should be the shame, but suppose that should be the situation after the minister had done his utmost. People in other vocations may have similar condemnations of inadequacy, but the consequence with them is a little less money obtained or of service rendered. With us it is some comfort unspoken, an injustice prolonged, men and women who die unrepentant who might have been convinced by an abler

minister of the nearness and availability of God —such conscious inadequacy is the chief difficulty of the ministry.

Because of these and other difficulties there is much dissatisfaction among ministers. In 1922 the New York Federation of Churches established an employment committee to meet the industrial depression. The ministers who applied for the position of secretary of the committee outnumbered the worthy needy persons whom the committee found to relieve. Much of this dissatisfaction comes not from difficulties but from losing the Master's joy in service.

I would not disparage as secular any occupation that serves the needs of men. The noblest occupation for anyone is that in which that one can do the most good. I do assert, however, that the peculiar compensations of the ministry are most satisfying.

The minister has an occupation into which he can put all of himself and in which he cultures his highest life. He is exposed to the peril of daily familiarity with the sacred, but, after all, it is his business to read the highest thoughts of the ages, to meditate upon the noblest motives and to develop friendship with God and man.

The minister also has the privilege of seeing the best in people. It has been said, that a minister sees men better than they are, a lawyer sees men worse than they are, a physician exactly as they are. We ministers know something too

about the disappointing duplicities of human nature and the distressing inequities in society, but we are also admitted into the homes and hearts of many of the finest families. We are with people in their supreme hours—in conversion, sickness, marriage, baptism, death—when they are most likely to be realest, and we find people to be surprisingly true and tender, generous, brave, and devout.

Still again we see persons and society becoming better. Without the ministry fewer colleges, asylums, and hospitals would be established. Without the ministry statesmen insist there is no likelihood of overcoming the greed and suspicion which incite war. Moved sometimes by a sense of duty, sometimes to escape dissatisfaction, sometimes by disgust at moral failure, sometimes from a longing for ethical improvement, sometimes out of imitation of another, sometimes out of sheer love for God, we see people come to Jesus Christ. Despite the sense of futility to which I referred, we do see moral power come to the penitent, peace to the restless, hope to the cynical, generosity to the selfish, ambition and aspiration to the young. All of this is so inspiring, elevating and joyful that I envy young ministers the first fresh taste of these delights.

I suppose, however, the testing question is whether we would have our sons also become ministers. That depends. My wife advises my

daughter not to marry a man unless she cannot help it, which advice might be taken to reflect more upon her father than her mother intends. In view of its difficulties, I would give my son the same counsel about entering the ministry. If, however, he should become convinced that it is the will of God for him to spend himself in communicating the gospel he has experienced, I would assure my son that he will have room to exercise all the talents he can develop, and find them not enough. I would assure him that despite every difficulty, so long as he keeps the sincere and self-sacrificial spirit of the Master, he will be glad every day to the very depths of his soul that he is a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

XII

"CHRIST—THE LORD OF HIS EVENT"

GARFIELD MORGAN

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12. 27).

In the prologue to his play Abraham Lincoln, John Drinkwater pays high tribute to the desire and valiance of man's spirit, setting it as the eternal wonder in the midst of mutability and the pits and pinnacles of change. He introduces two of the greatest actors in the drama for human freedom, Cromwell and Lincoln, and having commented on their contribution, he says that each in turn was "The Lord of His Event."

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." And Christ was the Lord of his event. Here is gathered up the great conflict, and it is brought before us in this text. There is the voice which suggests defeat if not escape. "Father, save me from this hour." Then the voice which results in the victorious mind of Jesus, "For this cause came I unto this hour."

How did the conflict come about? Why did it constitute a great drama in the life of Christ?

Was it not brought about because he differed from the religionists of his day in his interpretation of God, in the meaning of human life, in the causes for which he lived and in the spirit in which he pursued these causes?

With the persuasion of the beauty of God's holiness, and the power of God's love, he brought a new order of human relationships to the earth and inspired men to venture for infinite gain, bought at desperate present loss.

Walter Russell Bowie says, "Every age has in itself the possibility of becoming, by its own creative choice, the age of a triumphant new advent of Christ." Here is the preacher's responsibility and "the bearing of each man facing it, is all." With us, as with Christ, we shall hear the two voices, and what we do for the age in which we live will definitely reveal which of the voices we have obeyed. What are some of our own problems? We find ourselves in the midst of intellectual confusion, much pessimism and despair. There are abroad a deep distrust of religious verities and a ceaseless questioning of religious values. I have no need to amplify this. You are acquainted with many representatives of this spirit. Some of them are fair and are seeking the truth in a reverent spirit. In this group are Walter Lippmann and John Herman Randall, Jr. There are others who are ruthless, with no imagination in the history of institutions, and with little understanding or appreciation of

religious values. Such are Joseph Wood Krutch and Julian S. Huxley. That many people are bewildered and perplexed we cannot deny. What shall be the attitude of the preacher? Shall he hark back to the days when everything he said was accepted without question? Shall he wish for a modified form of Protestant authority, which silences the questioner and hushes the voice of distrust? No. For this cause, has he come to this hour, that with his enlightened mind, and with the spirit and teaching of Jesus, he shall fearlessly face all the facts; and having tested the reality of Christian truth in his own life, dare to lead his people into the discoveries which alone Christian living can find. This is no easy task. As Dean Farrar says, "Slackness in the army of God is infamy," and in such an age as this intellectual and spiritual slackness on the part of any preacher is wicked. Wishful thinking will profit us nothing. If we can lay any claim to succession among the prophets of the ideal to human society, then we, of all men, must learn the wisdom expressed by Spinoza, when he said, "I have taken my best pains not to laugh at the actions of mankind, not to groan over them, not to be angry with them, but to understand them." This is the inescapable responsibility of the preacher, to understand sympathetically the time in which he lives and bring to it the winnowed wisdom of the past. I am far from suggesting that it is possible for us to

keep pace with all the change and expanding knowledge of our modern world. Obviously, that is impossible. Our high privilege and accepted burden is to keep our minds open to the very best in thought and understanding of human life, that perplexed and bewildered people in the pews shall not look up in vain. We are all in grave danger of feeling that we have arrived, intellectually, and we coddle ourselves that, in the vacation period, we need rest and relaxation. I am convinced that for most of us it should be the time to catch up and gather new perspectives, even though our study has been ever so regular and consistent. Some of our vacation could be spent advantageously in getting familiar with those new approaches to truth which save the sermon from being shallow and sterile and the preacher from losing his belief in the "romance of preaching." The summer session in the best seminaries and universities should find more of us preachers in attendance. I have often marveled at the zeal of the day-school teachers, both during their period of regular work and during the summer. The inspiration and profit would be incalculable to our ministry if we would expose ourselves to the currents of human thought by going back to school. Here in New England we are especially privileged, and there is no better place for us to find out the trend and tone of the times in which we live. When this has been enriched by the preacher's

own vital experiences and the fires of his own devotion, then will his messages become corrective and constructive. "For this cause came I unto this hour."

There is with us an undeniable pessimism and despair concerning the question, Is life worth living? It is significant that this is in evidence at a period when material prosperity is in the saddle. In his foreword to *The American Novel To-day*, Regis Michaud says: "The average American is an optimist superficially, but many disappointments lie buried in his heart. There seems to be some ungratified longing in his life; neither Puritan asceticism nor material prosperity can satisfy the new generation in America. The newcomers declare themselves discontented; they have become frankly pessimistic. A proud and wealthy nation, the proudest and wealthiest of all, the most eager and the most successful in conquering the means of material welfare, America does not seem to know how to make her children happy. They are in revolt, they are questioning the ideals and institutions of their fathers. In poetry, in drama, in the pulpit and in the press, pessimism and criticism prevail. Only recently the élite of the American intelligentsia declared that the civilization of the United States had been a failure."[1]

There may be some exaggeration in this, but we have seen enough to feel confident that we

[1] Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company, publishers.

cannot ignore such a dangerous tendency. For, as Professor W. E. Hocking says, "If progress must bring disillusionment and the harsh daylight of a denying realism, then progress is destined to devour its own children." Is not this the preacher's greatest problem, remembering as he does that the worth of human life is the base upon which the whole superstructure of all life's values must ultimately rest? Obviously, our so-called progress in any direction is a mockery and a sham unless it grows out of and contributes to our conviction that the worth of life consisteth not in the abundance of things which a man possesses, but in the sensitive soul, the spiritual awareness, a wholesome response to the tragedy and suffering of life. Hear what William James says, touching this problem: "I confess I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not in part depend on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal. God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity. For my own part, I do not know what the sweat and blood and tragedy of this life mean, if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it feels like a real fight, as if there were something really wild

in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to redeem; and first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears. . . . Here are my last words to you: Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact." Set such an ideal over against the crude and coarse ideal represented by Joseph Wood Krutch, in his book entitled *The Modern Temper:* "The inevitable realization that living is merely a physiological process with only a physiological meaning, and that it is most satisfactorily conducted by creatures who never feel the need to attempt to give it any other." The difference that Jesus made is incalculable, when he demonstrated for all time that life is a priceless gift from the Highest, the belief that sets in the life of man the urge for all achievement and gives it significance. Our struggle against industrial injustice, our fight for a world organized for peace instead of war, our battle against ignorance and disease are evidences of our belief that human personality, as illumined by Jesus, is the goal of Christian living, in the name of God and his kingdom on earth. "For this cause came I unto this hour."

Is not the skepticism concerning the worth of human life closely allied with distrust of the democratic ideal? We cannot be unmindful of the tendency that is abroad which does not hesitate to declare the futility of the democratic ideal in government. It is of course true that in the

increasing complexity of our society we must recognize the need of the expert, of the man who has been especially trained for some aspect of government. However, this does not give us the right to despair of the judgment and honesty of the average man in the matters of government. Here again we find ourselves forced to throw the weight of our lives upon one of the great alternatives. Jesus deliberately staked everything on his faith in men, and the leader of to-day, whether religious or political, unwilling to trust the people is not fit to be trusted by the people. As Dr. George A. Gordon has so aptly reminded us: "Many mistakes democracy has made, and many more it will make, because it is a form of government in the hands of imperfect human beings. But when one grows pessimistic, let him think of what democracy has superseded, let him think of the worlds of woe and blackness that it has abolished, of the substantial good that it has brought into being, that it supports, that it gives reasonable hope of increasing more and more. Democracy does not disparage worth; it often makes mistakes as to who are worthy, but the people have an instinct for reality, and whenever they find a real man, a man of intellect, character, especially courageous character, they not infrequently go with him with the power of the tide."[1] I know of no more illuminating example

[1] *My Education and Religion.* Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

of this than modern Germany: How many people felt that her history had incapacitated her for political democracy! and yet, behold what she has done in the last decade. One of Boston's most penetrating thinkers on modern problems told the writer the other night that Germany's ability to set her house in order, and to set in motion the forces of democracy, is the most heartening event that has come to the liberals since the war. He also said, "The preacher should be the last person to lose his faith in the sane judgment of the people." For the cause of intelligent and righteous government made possible by the will of the people has the preacher come to this hour.

Finally, we are committed to the belief that the practice of war is an outrage on the Christian form of human society—"the sovereignty of the kingdom of man." The signs of the times are prophetic of a new day, and we cannot fail to see in these signs the possible birth of a new freedom for humanity. Some of us engaged in the last conflict became all too familiar with the soul-sickening sights. To convince him of the insanity of war, no preacher needed this experience. Surely, our cheeks must burn with a sense of shame if we feel that any statesman anywhere is more passionate in his purpose for a warless world than the ambassadors of Christ.

It is not enough that the church decides to bless no other war. Negations do not get us very

far. We must strengthen the hands and support the faith and efforts of those who stand in responsible places in government and are endeavoring to rid the world of the whole ghastly regime of war-thinking. This hope of world peace is not merely a political ideal nor is it dependent on some international agreement. It is deeper than these. It is structural in the life and aspiration of man, and unless we are mistaken it cannot be indefinitely mocked or defeated. "For this cause came I unto this hour."

Perhaps my readers will think that such a challenge is far removed from the circumscribed influence of even the greatest preacher, and are saying, "What does this mean to me in my small parish?" Is it not here that we discover the fallacy of much in our ministry? We long for the spectacular, we must have immediate results. Consider the poet's suggestion:

> "Hark! the rushing snow!
> The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,
> Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
> Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
> As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
> Is loosed, and the nations echo round,
> Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now."[1]

If we can present truth until like mountain snow, flake by flake, its weight carries ancient abuses crashing into the abyss we shall not have served our day and generation in vain.

[1] From "Winged Sandals," by Lucien Price. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company, publishers.

XIII

THE PULPIT AND THE PEW

OSCAR THOMAS OLSON

"I ADMIT that it is wonderful, simply splendid," said a university student, "but, after all, why preach? It seems awfully odd that one man should stand up and talk and that other men should sit still and listen." I suspect that every preacher often confesses to a feeling of presumption that he should stand up and speak and that other men should sit still and listen. This matter of preaching has been going on for a long time and has acquired a place for itself. It has won at least what the psychologist would call "a survival value."

Now, it is true that to-day there are not as many people who are willing to sit and listen to the preacher as sat and listened yesterday. And I find myself wondering if many preachers are as "terribly glad" to be preaching as Carl Sandberg's "Fish Crier" was for the chance of selling fish.

"I know a Jewish fish crier down on Maxwell Street with a voice like a north wind blowing over corn stubble in January.
He dangles herring before prospective customers evincing a joy identical with that of Pavlowa dancing.
His face is that of a man terribly glad to be selling fish, terribly glad that God made fish, and customers to whom he may call his wares from a pushcart."[1]

[1] Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

Here was a plain man, an ignorant man, doing unsavory work, who had found that fierce happiness that comes out of living adequately; he was "terribly glad" to be doing his job; it took the whole energy of his life. Preaching may be a meaningless pantomime; it may be a chance to declare "the joy of life, the quick affection, the creative insight, by which the world may grow young and beautiful and filled with vigor."[1]

Wise old Thomas Carlyle was sure that preaching was one of man's greatest functions. Listen to him:

"That a man stand there and speak of spiritual things to me, it is beautiful; even in its great obscuration and decadence it is among the beautifullest, most touching objects one sees on the Earth. This Speaking Man has indeed, in these times, wandered terribly from the point; has, alas, as it were, totally lost sight of the point, yet, at bottom, whom have we to compare with him? Of all public functionaries boarded and lodged on the Industry of Modern Europe, is there one worthier of the board he has? A man professing, and never so languidly making still some endeavor, to save the souls of men: contrast him with a man professing to do little but shoot the partridges of men! I wish he could find the point again, this Speaking One, and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy, for there is need of him yet! The Speaking Function, this of Truth coming to us with a living voice, nay in a living shape, and as a concrete practical exemplar: this, with all our Writing and Printing Functions, has a perennial place. Could he but find the point again—"[2]

You will recall that when Ralph Waldo Emerson was asked why he resigned from the pulpit,

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[1] Bertrand Russell, *Why Men Fight*. Reprinted by permission of The Century Company, publishers.
[2] *Past and Present*. Book IV, Chapter I.

he replied by saying, "Because I do not feel inspired by the Holy Spirit every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock." In dealing with this matter of preaching, and fully aware of the vast amount of it that is dispensed, we are prompted by the economic spirit to inquire not whether it pays, but whether it pays as largely as it ought. In no line of production is there a perfect equivalence between what is laid in and what is drawn out. One of industry's major problems is the reduction of waste. An enormous amount of energy is wasted in the production of the resources necessary to successful living. It is a matter of real concern to those who are engaged in even the most ordinary kinds of manufacture to make the approach to equivalence as close as possible. The effectiveness of any man in any relationship of life is at the point of his ability to produce.

The practical value of preaching is determined by the pulpit and the pew conjointly. There is much that the pulpit can do for the pew; there is more that the pew can do for the pulpit. By this I do not mean to lift any of the responsibility from the pulpit. The "Speaking Man"—to use Carlyle's designation—must carry his own high responsibility for what he has to say. He will, from time to time, say to people what they neither seek nor desire. The first great duty of the pulpit is to be genuinely true to its insight and message, even though the pew answers with a scourge or a cross.

The pew asks the "Speaking Man" to be a prophet, a man who speaks with insight concerning the eternal meaning of things. But the pew, far more surely than it dreams, creates and inspires the kind of a situation that brings or thwarts the inspiration of the Holy Spirit from the pulpit on Sunday morning at eleven o'clock. Through the sympathy and responses of the pew, however made manifest, through what the pew asks of the pulpit directly and indirectly, is the pulpit message born. The need of the church is not only for a pulpit that will attract but for a pew that will hold. There are congregations such that the preaching that seeks to relate life to those Eternal purposes that are lovely and of good report would be of no value even though Paul or Gabriel were the preacher. On the other hand, there are congregations whose sensitiveness to what is real and of abiding worth is so keen that they would make veritable Pauls or Gabriels out of the most ordinary kind of preacher. This means that while sermonic value is determined in part by what the preacher puts into the message, its productive effectiveness is determined about equally by the attitude of the hearers. The co-operation of the pulpit and the pew is essential to effective preaching.

I want to indicate three ways in which the pew can become contributory to making the pulpit speak of what is true and real with a living and productive voice.

1. The first is suggested by the language that was used by Cornelius the centurion when he and a few friends had come together to listen to Peter, when Cornelius, speaking in his own behalf and in that of his household, said to the apostle: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Now, if you knew nothing more about the circumstances of the case than what is involved in that statement, you would be absolutely sure that something was going to happen. Entirely apart from any prior conviction that you might have as to the preaching ability of Peter, you would be certain that it would be a great performance just because of what Cornelius and his friends were themselves going to contribute to it. You must picture to yourself the attitude of mind with which they greeted the preacher. Their attitude was intensely expectant, not conventionally curious. There was no resemblance between that situation and the one on Mars' Hill when Paul spoke to the Athenians, who, we are told, cared for nothing but to hear and to tell some new thing, who were interested in the preacher only as they would be interested in any novel exhibition, like a certain type of movie-minded city dweller interested in the pulpiteer who will be an entertaining rabble-rouser, exploiting moods rather than preaching principles, influenced by considerations that stand quite aloof from the supreme purpose of a service of worship.

We are dealing here with a real principle of life applicable in all situations where communication of any kind is made to us. We must be in a receptive attitude toward the words loaded with truth that seek to anchor in the haven of our minds and hearts. Our mind has to explain to us what some one else's mind sends to us. We live within our own capacity to do as we please with the truths that are launched toward our minds. Over in Washington at the present time our Congress is wrestling with the tariff. We control the government of our own minds and hearts. We have the power to erect walls of protection around the little republic of our own minds and hearts. You can't live very long and get out into the jam of free competition before you have to face the question of the protection of the infant industry of thinking. All sorts of devices and mechanisms are offered as cheaper substitutes for thinking. It's all very well to say that we will mingle freely in the cosmopolitan air of modern life and do our own thinking. But can we succeed at this when there are so many people with more adequate and more effective facilities who are eager to do our thinking for us? There is not a single subject on which we cannot get ready-made opinions, in all the standard sizes and styles, cheaper than we can make them ourselves. The finished products of foreign intellects are dumped on our home market, while our own intellectual facilities are suffering from unem-

ployment. It is a waste of time to really think when thoughts can be furnished by syndicate news writers, chain news interpreters, and highly mechanized propagandeers, at much less cost per thought than we can produce them ourselves.

We have control of the frontiers of our minds and hearts to determine what words spoken to us shall be instruments of power and which shall be mere gestures of shadow. We cannot have a commerce of truth or an interchange of reality between persons until a reciprocal trade agreement is entered into. What is conferred must run in the groove that has been opened for it. A vital artistic sense is a necessary preliminary to appreciating whatever of an artistic character is presented for entrance into the republic of our minds and hearts. Active and rich emotion is the only medium through which whatever is of high and impassioned quality can reach us. A spiritual sensitiveness must precede the appreciation of a spiritual disclosure. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So whatever of quality comes to us in our relation with life it is because of what we ourselves bring to every reception of life. Spiritual quality of the highest grade may be presented from the pulpit, but if an unspiritualized attitude is present in the pew, we are the witnesses of a failure of commerce.

In the house of Cornelius the minds and hearts of all were ready for a commerce of ideas and the reception of inspirations. From the very start Peter's words dropped into prepared minds and hearts. The thought of Cornelius leaped to grasp the thought of Peter. The beat of Cornelius' heart fell into instant pace with the throb of Peter's heart. That made great preaching whatever may have been the intrinsic value of the particular sermon. There was no time wasted, no intellectual or spiritual energy fruitlessly exercised.

2. Another feature of this congregation that met in the centurion's house is indicated by his declaration that "now are we all here present before God." The religion of Cornelius was a very real and substantial fact. God was very much more to him than a theory or an imagination. God was more than "the personal idealization of experienced reality."[3] God was not made out to be a sort of "cosmic Santa Claus." The certainty of God was the supreme fact of life for Cornelius. He was "a religious man, who reverenced God with all his household, who was liberal in his alms to the People, and who constantly prayed to God" (Acts 10. 2. Moffatt). He and his God were near to one another, so near that in some way, we are told, a divine impression had been made upon him that the apostle was a man that had a message for him that he needed to hear, so

[3] Edward Scribner Ames, *My Conception of God.*

that the entire occasion was pervaded with a sense of sanctity. To his conception the meeting had been divinely convened. The room where they met became a consecrated place. God was a Real Presence. Peter began to speak and said: "God has no favorites—he who reverences Him and lives a good life in any nation is welcomed by Him" (Acts 10. 35. Moffatt). The message was not only an instruction but a devotion.

I wonder if the failure of much of our preaching is not due to the fact that we so largely leave God out of the account. Here the pulpit and the pew began with the fact of God and God's real presence. Someone once said to Alice Meynell that it was difficult to understand how she could accept the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence in the sacrament. "Yes," said Mrs. Meynell, "it may be difficult, but you Protestants have something worse than the Real Presence, you have the Real Absence."

Here we must face the high inquiry; how is it possible to believe that ordinary persons can, in any genuine sense, be aware of living in the actual, real presence of God? Here we face the old question as to the meaning of this whole business of living. What is the highest purpose, the chief end of man? Is it simply to eat and to drink, and to-morrow to die? Is man meeting all the capacities of his being when he gathers food like the ant or bee? Is man finding the ends of his life when he herds with his kind like the beasts of

the field? Is man fulfilling the reach of his abilities when he organizes himself into societies for the purposes of business, education, and comfort? Is man reading the story of his experience aright when he interprets his history as a part of the animal life of the world? Is man getting the right clue to the business of living when he thinks of himself as a pawn of pleasure and pain, and concludes that in origin, career, and destiny he is altogether of this world? Has Bertrand Russell got the matter right when he says: "Man is the product of causes that had no prevision of the end they were achieving; . . . his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms—all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system."[4]

There is always a part of us that protests this reading of the facts and forces of man's life. There is that range of experience beyond that which we can fasten into space or time. It is that revolt of the human spirit against the imprisoning bars of circumstance that Frederick W. Robertson from his Brighton pulpit in 1851 spoke for, when he said: "There are few more glorious moments of our Humanity than those in which Faith does battle against . . . a cold-

[4] Bertrand Russell, *A Free Man's Worship*. Reprinted by permission of Thomas B. Mosher, publisher, Portland, Maine.

blooded materialist's demonstration, in which God, the soul, and life to come, are proved impossible—up rises the heart in all the giant might of its immortality to do battle with the understanding, and with simple argument, 'I feel them in my best and highest moments to be true,' annihilates the sophistries of logic."

We have the insight and the experience to deal with what the ancient Hebrew singer gave as his best and highest view of things:

"Nevertheless I am continually with thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psa. 73. 23-26).

In our final account with ourselves we stand exactly where Cornelius stood—"before God." Our highest and supreme interest is to reverence him and live a good life.

What was it that Carlyle said about the Speaking Man—"Could he but find the point again"? The point that must be found again is that which will make the message of the pulpit something more than a current lecture. And it is in that vital sense of life being held in the presence of God so that God himself speaks. Here is to be found the final meaning of man's life. Man comes from the God who hath set eternity in his heart

and so the supreme and endless interest of man is to find a real relation to his God and live the good life. John Wesley believed that when a man met God he knew Him. There are altogether too many just now wondering whether there be such a thing as conversion, and spending a great deal of time psychologizing the experiences of religion. There are too many occupied with a philosophy of religion that never gets out of the realm of intellectual formula, and all the time in our midst are poor aching hearts vaguely longing for an assurance of the real presence of God.

As the needle in the compass turns toward the pole, as it knows its function however wide and wild and lonely the sea may be, as it keeps in all zones and in all seasons, and in all the vexed courses of its life the sense that it is a witness to a greater than itself, so man trembles toward the Infinite. When true to himself, he knows, in all gales of passion, on every sea of human interest, on the boundless ways of ambition, on the shoreless meanings of home, industry, citizenship and racial fellowship, that he was made to testify of Another, a mightier, a juster, and a kinder than himself. His heart is restless until it rests in God.

The distinguishing feature of the magnetic needle is to point toward the pole; the distinguishing feature of man is to witness to the Eternal. There is no significance to the pulpit unless there be in the pew a sense of the presence in the pulpit utterances of something besides

humanness. Lecturing and preaching are essentially distinct in just this particular. The pew is not to be blamed for taking only ordinary interest in what comes from the pulpit unless the pew detects in it that distinguishing feature that makes it an authentic word bearing witness to God. Multitudes are straying by the doors of our churches and are putting the fertility and vitality of mind which used to go into an appreciation of the Word of God and the true purposes of life into activities and forms of expression that have no connection with organized religion. Some of the most acute minds that we know rarely go into a church, or if they do, they do not expect to be intellectually aroused or morally challenged. The lack of mental ability in the pew should not blight the pulpit with intellectual frugality. When a man says that he can absent himself from the service of worship and derive as much good from reading his newspaper as he can by attending church, what he means to say is that there is in what he hears from the pulpit none of that differentiating quality which gives evidence of eternal authority, a quality, therefore, which defies human resistance, that challenges, however the hearer may hold back from the challenge.

It is instantly apparent what must have been the effect of Peter's sermon, a preacher who was genuinely the mind of God come to human utterance and recognized to be such by his auditors. The occasion must have been almost gripping, as

though God himself had stood among them in some kind of visible disclosure. And the record in its closing passage indicates just that. The pew responded to the divine touch, and "while Peter was yet speaking the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word." If the pulpit is to have Speaking Men for truth and reality, then the pew must love truth. If the pulpit is to hold clear-visioned spokesmen for the Eternal the pew must live for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit of man in every relationship of life. When you seek the reason for the fact that Scotland has been so enormously rich in its men of the pulpit, you have but to look to the crowded pew with men and women who are "present before God," and you have the reason. The pew is the greatest single factor in making the pulpit.

3. The third contribution that the pew makes toward the effectiveness of the pulpit is the way in which the truth of the sanctuary is taken out into the actual test of life. Paul at one time enumerated a number of particulars that inhere in the good life, and he added "think on these things." Truth is not merely to be listened to and inspected; it is to be lived out in experience. If psychology is telling us anything, it is telling us that everything which touches or stimulates life in any fashion must eventually be made incarnate in action, must express itself in deeds. If we fail in the translation of the prophetic truth into life, its reality is broken. The most useless thing

in the world is a great thought unrelated to life, a holy challenge heard but not obeyed, a high call listened unto but not heeded.

Nothing that approaches us becomes an integral part of us except by our own reaction upon its approach. Every oscillation in the atmosphere resulting in what we call sound becomes such at the expense of physical expenditure on our part. Every glint of light and color gets its meaning as we look at the play of the waves. The scheme of reception is conducted on that principle universally. The food that we take becomes muscle and energy to us because our organs are fitted to digest, assimilate, and adapt it to our use. These facts are not always realized to the fullness of their import. Truth is not a matter that accomplishes its function by merely being inspected. As soon think of quenching your thirst by looking at a glass of water.

When we have stood before a beautiful painting we do not capture its meaning by a hasty glance at the canvas. We sit down before it and devour it. That is what we do. We devour it! Our whole resource of the sense of artistic charm is challenged to confront the charm that is depicted and to feed upon it and consume it. We repeat our visit and we re-repeat it till it has become ours, yes, and become us!

Apply this principle to the matter of the relation between the pulpit and the pew. Perhaps the preacher has spent the best and most serious

thought of an entire week in his attempt to get into the very vitals of the truth he is to enunciate from his pulpit, not simply preparing to present given truth, but seeking so far as possible to enter into its vital meanings for life. Even when the largest credit is given to the insight and appreciation of the pew it is not to be expected that the momentary glance given to it in the hasty moments of its delivery will yield all that there is in it. Opportunity is afforded merely for the reception of nutriment. The process of digestion and assimilation will have to follow later. The whole matter of the relation of the pulpit and the pew is not finished with the sanctuary service of worship. The analogy between that and the receiving of physical nourishment ought to make this perfectly clear. I was sitting at luncheon with one of the men of my church the other day talking about this very matter, and he commented that "people generally sat passively in church musing over the contents of the religious menu offered rather than actively partaking of the divine food offered in worship." There is a tremendous wastage because of the habit of merely inspecting truth instead of going on to incorporate it into life. There is a tremendous amount of ineffectiveness because of the habit of looking at the Water of Life instead of drinking it. There is a tremendous percentage of spiritual nonproductivity because of the habit of handling the Bread of Life instead of following up that act by letting

it become an organized element in the mind and heart—which requires time and conscious elaboration. Altogether too often you can see churches that are quietly going to sleep. They resemble country clubs or delicatessen shops, rather than centers of life where men and women earnestly seek that truth and reality of God that will bring salvation.

We all need to guard against letting church attendance play the part in religions that the telling of beads may do in Roman Catholicism, encouraging us to imagine that we have achieved the substance of the matter when we have only gotten to its shape and ceremony. There is no religion in reading a chapter of the Bible until something in the chapter grips us. When we gather about the dinner table we gather for a very distinct purpose. It is not a chore to be done, nor a ceremony to be transacted. There is no celestial secretary to jot down the number of attendances upon services of worship. The matter we are dealing with is more profound than that. Personally, I do not believe we will have a revival of religion until we have a new interest in attendance upon the services of the church. But it is not the number of attendances upon the services of worship that is determining. It is the moral and spiritual appetite that is determining. It is hunger for the Eternal Truth and going where it is to be had that is determining. It is moving toward God's temple with a mind that

is full of attention and a will that is alert with resolution and a heart that is loaded with yearning desire that will bring a vital sense of spiritual reality. It is not habit, not duty, not curiosity, but expectation that waits on satisfaction. People generally get that which they really lay themselves out for. They generally find that for which they heartily and genuinely search.

XIV

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

William Pierson Merrill

No properly educated person will wholly miss the allusion in my theme. For one element in a proper education is such familiarity with tales of magic and faery, of folklore and nonsense, as shall provide a dwelling place for the fancy however hardworking and humdrum existence may become. The cry "New Lamps for Old" comes to us from the delightful story of Aladdin. You will remember that, after he had rubbed the lamp, commanded the genie, married the princess, and built the superb palace, having little use for the lamp which had secured him all this, he put it away and forgot it. Along came the wicked magician one day, crying out, "New lamps for old," and, innocently enough, Aladdin's wife gladly exchanged the old dingy lamp for a shiny new one. The new one was brighter, fresher, more up to date, but it could not do what the old had done. Aladdin had to travel and search for many months and with infinite taking of pains, to recover the lamp which was the source of his power.

These things form a parable for you and me, beloved in the Lord. There seems to me grave

danger just now that the minister may thoughtlessly, or even eagerly, and in all innocence of motive, exchange for the bright new lamps that are offered him on all sides the old-fashioned lamps in which are the secret of his power.

This does not mean that I stand here an apostle of obscurantism, an advocate of an unchanging order, concerned for the preservation of shibboleths, champion of that inflexible conservatism that would thrust out a dead hand to stay progress. God forbid! These things are of the devil. I say it in all seriousness. In his little book *Evolution and the Need of Atonement* Professor McDowall has clearly shown that all through history only those forms have been valuable that have been ready to change and move on, while the sin of sins has been contentment with things as they are.

It is our right and duty to thank God for all the new light and truth that is coming to us, to seize it and use it for the advancement of his Kingdom; to welcome all that is being brought to us in such bewildering profusion by modern knowledge, by pedagogy, and methodology, and theology, and sociology, and economics, and psychiatry, and the rest. It is the minister's business to be up to date so far as he can. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;" and it is part of a minister's function to make all this wealth serve the Lord and his kingdom.

But I feel in myself, and I discern in others, a

danger that in all this we shall leave the old lamps in a corner, or even let them go in exchange for some bright, new, highly polished, clear-burning light; only to find ourselves bereft of the unseen spiritual Presence that used to stand beside the man of God when he called and give him a power that eludes the best-elaborated thoughts and schemes of the modern mind. There is an old lamp that has come down from the beginning, "Since the first man stood God conquered, with his face to heaven upturned," through the hands of Brooks and Beecher and Wesley and Wiclif and Augustine and Chrysostom and John and Paul and Jeremiah and Isaiah and Amos and Moses and Abraham; if we lose that, we are poor indeed. Therefore I stand here, not to talk to you, as one is tempted to do, of useful methods, and novel ideas, and lessons learned as to ways of preaching and working, not to commend to you new riches from these open and abundant fields of religious education and modern method; but, rather, to remind you of simple, homely, old-fashioned means of grace which the minister must have if he is to be a good minister of God to the real lives of men and women and children.

There are five of these old lamps that I would bring out and set before you, begging you and myself never to forget or neglect them. With all my enthusiasm for modern religion, and all my impatience at the obstinate lingering of old things that ought to be taken out and buried, I am ready

to assert that the minister who has these five precious pieces of personal religious equipment has the essentials of a good ministry. Though he lack all our boasted modern endowments, if he have these he is better off than the most expertly trained modern graduate who cannot handle these tools of the spirit. They are Prayer, Knowledge of the Bible, the Personal Touch, Concern for the Inward, and a Passion for Jesus Christ. He who exchanges any one of these old lamps for the brightest and handsomest of new lights is making a tragic and irreparable mistake.

I do not for a moment urge that a minister of to-day shall take and keep and use these exactly as the fathers may have done. We rub the lamp in different fashion, and call on the Spirit for different objects; but the grace is the same as that the fathers used. Under all the changes of use and wont lies an unchanging reality of spiritual life.

Any minister will be a failure who does not live and breathe and work in the atmosphere of prayer. He may become well known, preach to thronged houses, get much publicity, be in demand as a speaker; but God will know his shallowness; and some day he will know it too!

I speak of the "atmosphere" of prayer. So I would think of the matter. I am far from sure that the minister of to-day should spend long hours in solitude, wrestling in conscious and deliberate prayer, as the men of God did in the

past. Ways have changed. There was a period when a man who wanted to know the time withdrew to a private spot where was a sundial, and watched with care till the sun shone out and marked the hour. Now he takes a bit of ingenious mechanism from his pocket, and an instantaneous glance is enough. For some of us prayer may have changed as greatly in method. Where once men sought long with care, now a glance is enough. Our religion, like our timepieces, has grown portable. We have it for instant use.

But we must have it, and use it. More important than anything that can come to him from all the riches of modern knowledge is the keeping up by the minister of a sense of the reality of the presence of God; an instant and constant practice of fellowship with the Father, felt at every moment, and consciously cultivated by habits of devotion that keep one's religion, like his watch, well oiled, reliable, and ready for instant use.

There is a verse in one of the Psalms which seems meant for the men of our own time: "I have set the Lord always before me"—as if one took God and kept him always in sight. It takes deliberate planning and action thus to get and keep the sense of the constant presence of the Eternal; but it can be done. And he who does not do it cannot be a good minister of God to the life of man. The living water men need can come only, as Jesus said, out of one's own inner life.

The second old lamp, sometimes dingy, very old-fashioned, but full of a strange power to influence the heart, is *Knowledge of the Bible.*

What I have in mind is not information about the Bible, important as that may be, but a working familiarity with its treasures. Not such knowledge as the custodian of a museum has of the musical instruments in his care; but, rather, the familiarity of the practiced violinist with his beloved instrument. Here many ministers are lacking. I am disturbed at times, when I note certain contrasts between the graduates of our most highly esteemed theological schools and the graduates of those Bible schools and seminaries which we are apt to view with distrust as sources which threaten to flood our churches with a hastily prepared ministry. We are wise to trust the thorough training of the well-equipped theological institution and to distrust the crude product of schools that are poor and partisan, however pious. Yet one often wishes that the graduates of our best theological seminaries knew their Bibles for practical purposes as some of these others do. I stand appalled at times at the obvious lack of ability to handle the rich treasures of this Bible. Its great thoughts and words should be stored in the mind of the minister. He should live with them, so that unconsciously they shall form and inspire his thinking and feeling. He should be at home in the Bible as a man is in his own room.

There is an amazing power and inspiration in such personal and practical familiarity with the Scriptures. The truth is that we have taken hold by the wrong end of this matter of inspiration. We have debated and argued as to whether the Bible is *inspired*, when the great fact is that it is *inspiring*. We have defended or attacked its meticulous accuracy, when the real matter is not that it does or does not possess the deadly and monotonous exactitude of the multiplication table, but that it does possess the power of a great symphony to arouse and refresh and inspire the soul.

Again let me say that no minister can afford to limit the range of his reading. Let him go freely into all the world of thought, and find there material for his work. But woe to him if, ranging never so widely through fields of general and special literature, he fails to keep close to the Bible, to read and study continually the little old books that came from prophets and evangelists and psalmists and apostles, and that, as a matter of sheer fact, have power to set and keep one close to God as no other books can do. The man who has the Word of God in his heart has a power to help, to comfort, to illumine, to inspire, such as no other man can have. It sounds extravagant, but it is sober sense to say that a minister may better afford to sink all the rest of his library in the sea and keep only his Bible, than to have rooms full of up-to-date books and

leave the Bible to gather dust in some neglected spot.

The third of these old lamps I have called the *Personal Touch.* I mean that quality or method or way of living and working that keeps one in vital contact with people, and makes him always and vividly conscious of the personal, even in the midst of the crowd, and in the use of the most approved methods.

We have fallen into the habit of talking of the *machinery* of parish work. It is a pernicious expression. There ought to be no thought of machinery about a church. There is enough of that outside, the Lord knows. The words Myers puts into the mouth of Saint Paul may well be a motto for the minister: "Only as souls I see the folk thereunder." That was what gave Jesus his marvelous and unfailing influence. No man or woman or child that came to him ever felt himself a "case," a "specimen," grist for the mill. Each was challenged to be himself, to a fullness of personality. So should the minister meet people.

I am not merely urging what is often called "personal work"; still less am I calling you and myself to that probing into the souls of men which a certain school is at present using with intense conviction. It seems to me unwise, to say the least, to violate the privacy of souls, to force confessions before men which God alone should hear. God does not force men. He

stands and knocks. High pressure personal work is a delicate and dangerous business. But many a minister is failing in influence, and will come to the end of the day without having his sheep in his hand, because he is not patiently and lovingly living with his people, getting to know them, and winning by extreme friendliness the right to be their helper in the name of God.

The minister of a modern church is called on to be an administrator of a high order. He is claimed by details of business inside of his parish and outside of it. He cannot evade these responsibilities. Old-time ways of pastoral calling may have to go by the board. The "house-going minister" too often finds only empty or closed apartments. How to get at people is a problem over which we wrestle and pray and wonder and pray again. But somehow we must keep touch with the souls of the people. Fresh contacts are as important in parish work as in electrical work. And, my friends, while I give you little or no specific counsel in this vital and difficult matter, I can tell you something of root importance; more vital than any method that you or anyone can devise is the heart that is in you, the real desire to keep touch, the eager wish to know people "where they live," as the homely phrase goes. Keep that little old lamp burning brightly, if you would be a good minister of God to man.

There were many things for which Jesus had no time in those brief months of his working life.

We read of lack of time to eat, to sleep, to rest, to pray. But always he had time for individuals. And he is our example. God pity and forgive the minister who becomes just the governor or throttle of a machine—no matter how big or noisy or productive or famous the machine may be. William James expressed what should be the attitude of a minister when he said he was "against bigness in all its forms" and "for those molecular forces that steal from individual to individual."

The fourth lamp I would remind you of is a twin of the one just shown. It is *Concern for the Inside of Life.*

There is so much in our life just now that limits attention to the outside. Even the prevalent philosophy (or at any rate the philosophy that makes most racket and show just now) is based on the proposition that all that we know is *behavior.* Forget what man *is;* watch what he *does.*

Now, it is the peculiar province of the minister to care supremely about the inside of things and people. He will be helpful, really helpful, in proportion as he can look through the show of things to the reality within. This does not mean that he will be other-worldly, or careless in manner and slovenly in dress; not at all. For me at least it is as hard to imagine Jesus unkempt or rude as to imagine him worrying about the cut of his clothes. Just because everything external embodied to him an inward wonder and personality he was careful about appearances. He

blamed the Pharisees, not for washing the outside of pots and pans, but for stopping with that.

But Matthew Arnold was right when he said that one of the supreme qualities of Jesus was *inwardness.* He always looked through to the inside. And the minister should have the mind of Christ in this, as in all things. When a minister gives plain proof that he cares about money, dress, social status, forms, numbers, publicity, outside things generally more than he cares about character, love, spiritual growth, integrity, faithfulness, beauty of soul, and the things of the Spirit, he gives plain proof of unfitness for the meanest pulpit and parish in the country. If he does not give, to his parishioners and to all who know him, the steady impression of one who sees through the shows of things to simple, spiritual realities, he had better ask God to create in him a clean heart before he goes on trying to be a minister of God. Yes, let us even dare to say that to care most of all for externals *in religion,* to care more about creed than about conviction, more about ritual than about worship, more about the sacraments than about grace, more about orthodoxy than about spirituality, is to deny one's calling.

One more old lamp the minister must guard. To some of us it is the most precious of all. It seems to us to hold the secret of the rest. It is a genuine and compelling passion for Jesus Christ. To care so much for him that one has a

comparative indifference to everything else, to love him so dearly that all other objects of affection and interest are caught up into that bright flame, is the supreme equipment for a good minister of God to man.

It is the fault of the ages that men have not taken Jesus seriously. It is the hope and glory of our time that they are beginning to see him, to trust him, to love him. Once more men are rediscovering him, catching visions of him, losing their hearts to him. Men who reject the church with scorn, and have a crazy-quilt sort of religion—George Bernard Shaw is an outstanding example—are saying of Jesus what they would say of no other son of man. No ministry can be truly and fully effective in such a day that is not filled and inspired with a radiant love and trust in Jesus, in his way of life, his wisdom, his presentation of God, his example, himself.

We know well, if we are wise at all, that there is more than joy in such a passion. There are stern implications, high challenges, hard demands, breathless followings, for one who really loves Jesus Christ. To set him as the One altogether lovely is to put into practice what Christians too often profess but fail to express. It is to make him really Head of the church. And that means to disown and fight against sectarianism, bigotry, self-righteousness, formalism, and to serve the cause of unity, spirituality, progress, love. It is to set him above the world. And that means to

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

hate with an implacable and uncompromising hatred war, and greed, and exploitation, and unfair distribution of good things, and to love and serve the cause of brotherhood, good will, and extreme justice. But with it all, and all through, it means a sustaining, glowing faith in "One that with us works"; it means the greatest joy life holds—that of self-forgetfulness in the love of someone utterly worthy. It means feeling once more the exultant force that drove Paul on his course: "The love of Christ constraineth us."

Here is our sufficiency, and here alone.

"Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,
He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed.
Christ is the end, as Christ was the beginning;
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

Once more I say, lest I be misunderstood, that this is no plea that we reject or value lightly the marvelous riches God has opened to us in these days. What a world it is in which we stand! This glory of modern science, with its noble philosophy of evolution (incomparably richer and finer than the old philosophies); this amazing modern development of historical criticism, making us know the past, the Bible, the early church, Christ himself, as other ages could not; these riches of psychology, educational method, political theory, and the rest. Reach out your hand and your mind, and take all you can. It is yours to use for God and man. "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

But keep the plain, old, simple lamps at hand and in use. There is still a power in them that does not always come with the use of the new. They are not inconsistent with the fresh knowledge, the new light, any more than the stars are inconsistent with modern science.

The New Testament opens with a story of how Wise Men brought rich gifts to the newborn Saviour. It ends with the vision of a city of God into which the kings and wise men bring the riches and glory of the nations: gold, pearls, precious stones—all the wealth and beauty of life. But all the gold and frankincense and myrrh was of no moment compared with the significance of the Babe in the manger. And all the golden streets and pearly gates and jeweled walls in themselves are trifles, of value only as symbols of the unseen, spiritual presence of the Eternal. Such is our religion, now and always. The riches of the world are to be taken by us and set to the service of our Lord. But they are nothing, save as symbols and servants of the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Jesus himself drew a little but perfect picture of the true minister, when he said that the scribe who had been instructed in the kingdom of God would be like a householder, bringing forth out of his treasures things new and old. Thank God for the wonder and richness of the new in this day. But every true householder values most a few precious old pieces, which nothing new can

replace. And the most modern and progressive minister of Jesus Christ, as he looks with eagerness and gratitude at the wealth of new things available to-day for his vocation, may well say still, "The old is better. Thank God above all for the things that grow more precious with the years, because they are eternal."

XV

WHEN PREACHING HAS WINGS

William L. Stidger

It is worth while to read an entire volume to get an introduction to an address if you are able in that volume to find a single phrase which sums up the idea that you wish to convey. I do not believe greatly in what we call introductions to sermons, but now and then one finds a continent to introduce a theme, and then he must not withhold.

In a Life of Leonardo da Vinci I learned that he was a master of many things; that he was a great mathematician, respected and honored in this field; that he was a sculptor of no mean talent; that he was a poet; that he was a musician who not only wrote music but manufactured his own lyre on which to play that music. I learned that he was a great military strategist and that he designed forts and defenses for besieged cities in his immortal day. But most interesting of all I found that he was an inventor; and that, as such, he drew the designs and plans of an airship. Beneath those plans he wrote this prophetic sentence far back in the fifteenth century: "There shall be wings!"

To-day we see in every sky the fulfillment of

the prophecy of this man who was justly called "The Miracle of the Fifteenth Century." To all his other accomplishments he added the genius of prophecy.

I want to use that great prophetic phrase as a theme to carry the thought of what I feel are the great elements of preaching; elements which were true of preaching in the past, are true of great preaching to-day and must be true of any preaching which shall be gripping in the world of to-morrow. In such preaching "There shall be wings." In truly great preaching indeed there *must* be wings.

I

There Shall be the Winged Word

I like that immortal phrase of the poets of the past—"the winged word." It is a haunting phrase and it is a meaningful phrase. There is such a thing as a "winged word." Such a word leaps and laughs and dances, like the winged Mercury. It has speed and light and love in it.

Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, last year in this same Conference on Preaching, gave us a sparkling address on "The Romance of Words," and before he was through we had caught the full beauty of that romance. To-day I speak in the first part of this address on preaching of "The Winged Word."

The winged word must be the well-chosen word. We must be "Sentimental Tommies" and

choose the exact word, with the exact meaning that we wish to convey, and we must not allow our souls to be satisfied with anything short of the exact word. To that end we will be happy in the study of words, synonyms, and in the finer distinctions and meanings of words.

I have watched the great poet Edwin Markham in his study of words. I have watched him chisel his granite like a sculptor in the spirit of his own poem about Phidias:

> "Once Phidias stood, with hammer in his hand,
> Carving Athene from the breathing stone,
> Tracing with love the winding of a hair,
> A single hair upon her head, whereon
> A youth of Athene cried: 'O Phidias,
> Why do you dally on a hidden hair?
> When she is lifted to the lofty front
> Of the Parthenon, no human eye will see!'
> And Phidias thundered on him: 'Silence, slave:
> Men may not see but the Immortals will!' "

In some such spirit as this I have seen this great American poet practice like a "Sentimental Tommy" what he preaches about the selection and the use of words, until his words have wings.

I remember a particular poem of his which I used to quote incorrectly. He insisted that I quote it as he had written it. This is the poem:

> "There is no time for hate, O wasteful friend;
> Put hate away until the ages end.
> Have you an ancient wound? Forget the wrong. . . .
> Out in my west a forest loud with song
> Towers high and green over a field of snow,
> Over a glacier buried far below."

I used to quote the second line of that poem in this way:

"Put away hate until the ages end."

He showed me the added strength it gave that line to transpose two words "away" and "hate," and quote it in this more vigorous fashion:

"Put hate away until the ages end."

I illustrate this same thought in a well-known poem by Joaquin Miller. In his collected poems there is a poem which reads like this:

"In men whom men condemn as ill,
I find so much of goodness still;
In men whom men pronounce divine,
I find so much of sin and blot,
I hesitate to draw the line
Between the two where God has not."

Several years after Miller's death I was talking with Mrs. Miller and she told me that a few weeks before he died he revised that poem. He was always revising up to the end. He, like Markham, like all great workmen, was never satisfied. He was always looking for the magic word with wings; the word that would give a finer distinction, a fuller meaning to his thought. He changed one magic word in this poem and I shall give that change the emphasis and italics that it needs to illustrate my meaning. He wanted to make the social implications of this thought more impregnable. He wanted to go even further in his conclusions than he had when he first made

this social observation in poetry. He did it with one word:

> "In men whom men condemn as ill,
> I find so much of goodness still;
> In men whom men pronounce divine,
> I find so much of sin and blot;
> I do not *dare* to draw the line
> Between the two where God has not."[1]

"Hesitate" and "dare" are the changed words. See what "dare" does to that thought. It gives it wings. "Dare" is the winged word in that entire poem. So far as I know this difference has never been called to the attention of Miller enthusiasts before. I am glad to do it to illustrate my thesis.

In Lincoln's famous Gettysburg address it is significant, as Doctor Barton tells us, that in the five or six extant copies of that address of which we have records two words do not appear. In the copies which Lincoln wrote before he delivered that address two words do not appear. In all of the stenographic reports which appeared in the newspapers the day after the address these two words appear. These words are "under God."

When Lincoln stood up to deliver that immortal address the last phrase of it read like this: "That this nation shall have a new birth of freedom." But under the impact of that great, solemn moment Lincoln added these two words: "That

[1] From "Byron." Reprinted by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers.

this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom."

The Bible itself speaks in such sentiment as: "How forcible are right words!" and "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!"

Cowley speaks of "words that weep." Balzac says, "There are words which cut like steel," and Swift speaks of "the artillery of words." Adelaide Procter sings it: "Words are mighty; words are living!" and Shakespeare: "These words are razors to my wounded heart." Joubert, much to our point, says, "Before employing a fine word, find a place for it!" George Eliot says, "Our words have wings." Whipple says, "Nothing is rarer than the use of a word in its exact meaning." Lowell sings of Emerson's fine choice and use of words:

> "There comes Emerson first, whose rich words, every one
> Are like gold nails in temples to hang trophies on."

Wendell Phillips hurls this thunderbolt of a sentence to climax it: "On a single-winged word hath hung the destiny of nations." The precise use of words gives wings to preaching. There are, after all "winged words," and it shall be said of this type of preaching which uses words well and wisely, "There shall be wings."

II

There Shall be The Winged Phrase and Sentence in Great Preaching

We live in a world of phrases and flashes. It is

a flash age. We get it in advertising slogans, in motion-picture titles, in signboard publicity, in editorials and poems. This age catches its thought in phrases, slogans, and flashes. That is well. The most readable and the most popular editorial writer in America writes in flashes and paragraphs. "It struck and stuck," is a John McNeill phrase which is unforgettable. Well-selected phrases will strike, and they will stick to the garments of the mind.

Channing Pollock has said, "A single sentence will outlive a marble temple." I have tested that phrase and have found it true.

Single sentences bombard the soul: "Man—stands he not at the center of Immensities; at the conflux of Eternities?" shouted brawny-brained, blustering Thomas Carlyle. "Trust thyself! Every heart vibrates to that iron string!" sang the American prophet of phrases and slogans, Ralph Waldo Emerson. "And Lincoln was the Lord of his event!" is a single unforgettable sentence from John Drinkwater's Drama of Lincoln. "Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all!" is the trumpet blast of Vachel Lindsay. "And leaves a lonesome place against the sky!" sing the consecrated lips of Edwin Markham. "Sculpture must get back the hint of Eternity into its work," says Lorado Taft in his advice to American art. "We are talking nonsense on the edge of an abyss," Harold Begbie says, summing up the spirit of the after-war age in a sen-

tence. "He has a worm's eye view of the world," he says of a certain Englishman, in a sentence that struck and stuck. In a book I recently read on Mirabeau the author says: "He had a passion for prison."

The wise preacher of this day and age, this flash-age, will learn the magic use of great single sentences. He will find a certain magic eloquence in the use of couplets of poetry such as:

"Then something sacred whispers from the skies;
Then something deathless looks from dying eyes."
—*Edwin Markham.*

"And everything his eyes surveyed
Were creatures God Almighty made."
—*John Clare.*

"Kill me, none may; conquer me nothing can,
I am God's soul, fused in the soul of man."
—*Ella Heath.*

"I took a day to search for God;
I saw his footprints in the sod!"
—*Bliss Carman.*

"Then suddenly all unaware,
I heard God's voice upon the air."
—*Bliss Carman.*

"Oh God! My God! My own!
And I do not stand alone!"
—*Charlotte Perkins Gilman.*

And so on indefinitely I might illustrate the power, beauty, and impact of couplets of poetry. I have given a new homiletical definition to the use of these couplets—The Symphonic Theme. In this method one takes a text from the Bible, searches for a couplet that expresses the same

thought as the biblical text; and then, by a process of psychological repetition, the impact of which is immeasurable, carries the theme to its conclusion. I illustrate its possibility with the following theme, text, and symphony:

"The Everlastings of Life"

Text: "For, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

Theme:

"Hammer away, ye hostile hands,
Your hammers break; God's anvil stands."

These single lines of prose, these couplets, and quatrains of poetry, these slogans, and flashes give wings to preaching. People will remember forever the thought of a sermon summed up in a single line.

In the use of phrases, as well as in the use of words, "there shall be wings." Living words and vibrant phrases give wings to preaching.

III

There Shall be the Wings of Poetry in Preaching

Poetry gives wings to preaching.

Poetry is the language of the spiritual; it is the vehicle of all emotional expression. The preacher who is a poet, who loves poetry, who knows how to use poetry intelligently is always a popular and a helpful preacher. The heart of humanity responds to poetry. That is the reason why the

Psalms are the most popular pages of the Bible. The Bible is largely poetry.

The allegory, the symbolism, the beauty of the Old Testament is largely because of its poetry. The parables of Jesus are poetry, and even in form would to-day fit in with the general conception of free verse. The poetry of the Psalms, of Job, of Genesis, of Proverbs, of the Song of Solomon, of Ruth, of Revelation appeals to the heart of humanity as nothing else in the Bible. Preaching is the poet's paradise. There is a rare eloquence in poetry.

The other day I was reading a book of Lloyd George's addresses given both during and following the Great War. I had known for a long time of his cool-headed power during war days. I was not surprised to read his addresses and find a gold mine of Welch legend, poetry, imagery, and symbolism with which he climaxed, illustrated, and buttressed his speeches. It is my conviction that the power of Lloyd George with his audience was largely the presence of imaginative symbolism in his public utterances. He gave his abstract thought a symbolism that the people could comprehend, a figure, or an allegory which they could take away with them, some parable that they could repeat to their neighbors the next day.

He is a wise preacher who begins, and carries through, and concludes his preaching with poetry; with some poetic symbolism; with some parable,

or legend, or poetic phrase which people can grasp, and understand and carry away with them. No matter how abstract or academic his thought, if he can sum it up in some simple parable, he has captured the hearts and minds of both the common man and the superintelligent man.

Poetry gives wings to prophecy and preaching. "Once upon a time" still has its magic power for adults and children. There are a few wise preachers who have learned that *Alice in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the fairy stories of all ages have immortal charm for adults as well as for children. Dr. Halford E. Luccock, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, Bishop William A. Quayle, and a few other popular preachers whom I have known in recent years have caught the secret of the place of fairy stories in preaching, as mediums to convey thought. Even the Wizard of Oz has its value as a vehicle for carrying thought to the simple hearts of both adult and childhood humanity.

Alfred Noyes understood this mystery and appeal:

> "Oh, grown-ups cannot understand,
> And grown-ups never will,
> How short's the way to fairyland
> Across the purple hill;
> They smile; their smile is very bland,
> Their eyes are wise and chill;
> And yet, at just a child's command—
> The world's an Eden still."[1]

[1] From "The Forest of Wild Thyme." Reprinted by permission of Frederick A. Stokes Company, publishers, owners of copyright.

And so is the world an Eden still at a preacher's command if he is wise enough to live and move and have his ministerial being in the realm of poetry.

One needs but to quote two verses of poet Noyes to win his case, because in the very repetition of these verses, what I want to say of the appeal and power of poetry in expressing abstract thought is illustrated:

Little Peterkin was dead and Pease-Blossom and Mustard-Seed were trying to find him. On the way the Fairy told them how fairies are born and how they die:

"Men upon earth
Bring us to birth
Gently at even and morn!
When as brother and brother
They greet one another
And smile, then a fairy is born."

On the other hand:

"But at each cruel word
Upon earth that is heard,
Each deed of unkindness or hate,
Some fairy must pass
From the games in the grass
And steal through the terrible gate."

And they learned, also what makes a rose:

"What is there hid in the heart of a rose,
Mother-mine?
'Ah, who knows, who knows, who knows?
A Man that died on a lonely hill
May tell you, perhaps, but none other will,
Little Child.'

"What does it take to make a rose,
Mother-mine?
'The God that died to make it knows.
It takes the world's eternal wars,
It takes the moon and all the stars,
It takes the might of Heaven and Hell
And the everlasting love as well,
Little Child.'"

I can start at the Pacific Coast and come clear across the continent, and prove, if I wish, that the preachers who have won the hearts of humanity, preachers who have had it said of them that "the common people heard them gladly," preachers who have wielded great influence in their day; these men have been men who used poetry in their approach to the heart of humanity. Perhaps the most influential preacher in Methodism on the Pacific Coast during the past fifty years was Dr. E. R. Dille; a man who alternated between Central Church, San Francisco, and First Church, Oakland, most of his ministry; the most beloved and the most powerful influence in California Methodism for half a century. He literally saturated his preaching with poetry. The same is true of men like Dr. Robert Freeman, of the great Presbyterian Church in Pasadena; of Bishop William A. Quayle, of Dr. Frederick Shannon, of Bishops Hughes, McDowell, and a score of others—all men who have won the heart of humanity with their preaching. I should say that no sermon is injured and most sermons will be more understandable by the people, and be

greatly strengthened with poetry. "There shall be wings when poetry is used in preaching."

IV

The Eloquence of Facts Gives Wings to Preaching

There is a new eloquence coming into popularity. I like to call it the Eloquence of Facts.

I noticed it first during the World War. The layman or preacher who came back from the war had a new eloquence. He did not need to be a good speaker. He might have a lisp, or stammer; he might be mushy-mouthed, inarticulate, awkward, even uncouth, and still win great overflowing audiences and hold them spellbound for two hours. Why? Because he had the Eloquence of Facts. He had been in France. He had seen the boys. He might even have seen action. He could tell the people back home something in which they were interested.

I noted the power of the Eloquence of Facts second in Chautauqua and Lyceum circles. The old-time orator was passing. People did not care to hear the so-called "inspirational" lecture any longer. What they wanted was fact-lecturers. If a scientist came along like Doctor Pupin, who could tell them something about electricity, or like Doctor Slossen, who could tell them in language they could understand about chemistry, or some lecturer who could tell them about liquid air, or dry ice; or a Lorado Taft, who

could actually tell them about sculpture—they would listen eagerly and intently. Oratory as such is gone; the Eloquence of Facts has superseded it. There is no place to-day in Chautauqua, or Lyceum, or church for the old-time "orator."

The third place that I noticed the change was when the radio came into being just a few years ago. The old-time oratory would not go over the radio. First it would not go because it actually blasts the microphone. Loud tones blast and bombast and will actually smother themselves in transmission. Long-sustained flights of oratory will not get over. The radio speaker must speak in an ordinary tone of voice; in conversational style, clearly, distinctly, with force and power. People will not listen to sustained periods, or what we used to call "flights" of oratory, over the radio. They mutter to themselves the one word—"Bunk!" and turn the handle.

The most perfect illustration of these two contending principles of public speech, with the weakness and strength of each, we saw in action during the recent campaign for the Presidency of the United States. I hardly need to mention them.

From one candidate over the radio we heard an illustration of the old-time "blah-blah," haranguing, battling, bombastic, loud-mouthed, blatant, invective, yelling, threatening, convention type of political oratory of a past day. From

another candidate we heard the quiet, conversational style; fact-producing, unimpassioned at times; and at other times tense and impassioned public speech. It was convincing. It was fascinating. It was conversational. It was logical. It was the eloquence of fact. It won the ear, the heart, the mind, the attention, and the votes of the nation. There were night and day, black and white, wet and dry, stupidity and wisdom, intelligence and demagoguery in antithesis. The new eloquence won over the old. The radio has had much to do with bringing the new Eloquence of Facts into good repute.

This carries through to the end. Every sermon of to-day must be crammed full of fact material. It may be the facts of psychology, of chemistry, of astronomy, of invention, of medicine, of industry, of social science, of business, of life and living, but it must be the eloquence of facts.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick well says that every sermon of to-day must touch life in large areas of the congregation that hears it. I have a phrase that I like to use: "Every sermon must be linked up with life as men and women and youth and children live life." The sermons that seem impregnated with life and experience, the sermons that are saturated with psychology (which indicates a knowledge of the inner man and his problems), the sermons that drip with knowledge of the new discoveries of science, all shot through with a spiritual and biblical elec-

trical current of passion—those sermons have the new eloquence in them. "There shall be wings" in the new Eloquence of Facts.

V

There Shall be Wings in the Mystical Element of Preaching

The great religious leader and the great preacher of to-day, or of any other day, has been and is and will be, as long as humanity is what it is, the mystic.

I purposely follow the preceding part of this address with this treatment of mysticism in public eloquence. I purposely bring my address to whatever climax it may have with this brief treatment of the power of mysticism in preaching.

I go so far as to say that there can be no great power over human beings (human beings as they are), there can be no great and abiding leadership, no gripping eloquence which is not based in mysticism.

I have recently read *The Story of Religion*, by Charles Francis Potter, who is far from a mystic, although he followed a great mystic, Dr. J. Fort Newton, in the pulpit of the Church of the Divine Paternity, and even Doctor Potter, the antithesis of a mystic, is forced by the facts to show us that every great religious leader, from Akhenaten, "The First Individual in History," to Mary Baker Eddy, has been a mystic—one who has had the Great Illumination, the light that never

was on land or sea, the sudden sense of cosmic consciousness, the Road-to-Damascus experience, the New Testament rebirth, Tolstoy's "Regeneration" or "Resurrection." Call it what you may. Doctor Potter calls it "The Enlightenment" and "Theophany." Doctor Potter, greatly impressed with this fact all through his books, seems moved to repeat time and time again, with an emphasis which makes his reader feel that he himself has been startled and subdued by this new discovery, that "most prophets and mystics relate the shining of a bright light when God appeared to them. This was true of Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, and Paul."[1] Again he says: "They all speak of a great light or flame, and they are all commissioned to preach. Paul on the Damascus Road, or Moses by the burning bush, or Zoroaster by the bank of the Daiti—brothers all."

Every great religious leader who has left his impress on the hearts of vast groups of humanity has been a mystic. I not only offer the history of great religious movements as proof of this theory that mysticism, or religious experience, gives wings to preaching, but I would like, in concluding, to present some more recent testimony of the generation of to-day.

In McCall's Magazine in early September in the column which carries the permanent title

[1] From *The Story of Religion.* Reprinted by permission of Simon and Schuster, publishers.

"What's Going On in the World" Dr. J. Fort Newton selected as "The Sermon of the Month," a sermon by Dr. Albert Day, of Christ Methodist Church, Pittsburgh, one of our younger ministers. Doctor Day says: "Something is missing in modern religion. Everyone is aware of it. There is a lost chord of music, a dimmed radiance, a poverty of power felt everywhere. We sit dumbly at the instrument of the church, fumbling at the keys, unable to recapture the heavenly hosanna that has died away. An ineffable melody has ceased, and the world is left wistful and lonely—the thrilling songs once heard at our altars are seldom heard to-day."[1]

Doctor Day goes on: "Some will think that I am about to make a plea for Christian mysticism. I am! In spite of its errors in the past, mysticism is the soul of religion, without which its head, which does the thinking, is cold and hard, and its hands are limp and harsh. It is that vital spark, this haunting note that one misses in the religion of to-day."

This summer I talked with a young Presbyterian preacher, Dr. Elwood Rowsey, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, of Toledo, Ohio, one of the most brilliant and eloquent preachers in America—a prophet and a person. He told me the story of his conversion—as real and direct as that of Paul on Damascus Road. His eloquence is rooted in a religious experience.

[1] Reprinted by permission of McCall's Magazine.

I asked my students last year in their final papers to write me a biography of their lives. In ninety per cent of these lives there was a great and definite religious awakening and experience. That speaks well for the church and the pulpit of to-morrow.

In the Christian Herald, the editor, Mr. Stanley High, has permitted me to carry on a unique investigation. It came about in this strange way:

Tom Masson, formerly an editor of Life, a rather secular magazine, who is not even now a member of any church, wrote a story of his "illumination" or "conversion" which stirred me greatly. It was just as real and as vital as that of Augustine or Luther. I said to Mr. High: "If a layman who doesn't even belong to any church can tell your readers his religious experience, I want to tell mine. And in addition to that I want you to give, through your paper, an invitation to your readers to tell their religious experiences." I published mine, then Doctor Sheldon, author of *In His Steps* fame, published his, and then a perfect avalanche of letters began to pour in. Religious experiences from all over the earth—from China, and Japan, and Korea, South America, the deserts and mountain recesses, the prairies; from lonely Arizona and Montana—began to flood the office. It was like touching a match to powder.

I have not only noted these facts in support

of my thesis, but I have also noted that about the time the church has given up preaching about or having any expectation of a religious experience—which was the very heart and genius of Methodism's birth, which is the heart of the preaching and expectation of the New Testament, of Jesus and Paul—the world of fiction, through such writers as Tolstoy and Doisteevsky; the world of poets through such writers as Noyes, and Masefield in *The Everlasting Mercy;* the world of scenario writers through such plays as "Ben Hur," "The Ten Commandments," "The King of Kings," "Seventh Heaven"; and the world of dramatists through such plays as "The Miracle," "The Servant in the House," and "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," are literally fascinating the hearts of humanity with what we have discarded.

I believe I could say and prove that the greatest appeal that has ever been made to humanity—illustrated by *In His Steps*, which has sold more than 25,000,000 copies; and *Ben Hur*, which is a perennial in novel, drama, and picture; *The Everlasting Mercy*, a narrative poem about conversion, and "The Resurrection," by Tolstoy, the fiction story of an old-fashioned Methodist conversion—has been the appeal of a religious experience.

The world still hungers to be shown "the way" to this New Testament idea of an actual religious experience. The world of humanity leaps to the

light of this appeal as set forth in scenario, drama, poetry, and fiction. The book which honestly sets forth such an experience in all of its reality wins a vast audience—even though that book be poetry such as John Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy*. Even books like *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, by James; *Twice Born Men*, by Harold Begbie; and *Cosmic Consciousness*, by Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, are among the most popular books of this generation.

We all catch the appeal of Hay's little quatrain and respond to it as eagerly and wistfully as a flower turns to the sun:

> "I don't pan out on the prophets,
> Free will, and that sort of thing,
> But I've believed in God and the angels
> Ever since one night last spring."

"There shall be wings" to preaching when it is saturated with and buttressed by and impregnated with a religious experience in the heart of and on the *part* of the preacher; when there is a great expectation of such an experience coming to his hearers.

Doctor Day says: "What is this mystic experience? It is neither occult nor esoteric. It is the realization, the finding real, in our hearts, of what is already true to us in ideal. It is such an intuition, or experience, or union with the whole which gives unity and meaning to all its parts; such an affinity of the soul of man with God that the soul becomes aware of God and its oneness

with him. Here is the heart and core of religion, and to miss it is to miss both its meaning and its power."

I am particularly glad to quote Doctor Day because his voice is one more confirmation of my belief that such an approach has the backing of the hearts of the younger ministry of to-day. I believe that such an appeal will find understanding hearts in our theological seminaries. I believe that the students who enter our theological seminaries are hungry for the sunlight of an emphasis on a living, vibrant religious experience, as the basis of preaching that is to be passionate, prophetic, and powerful in its appeal to either the preacher himself or to his audiences.

A few days ago I was visiting with Mr. Charles Connick, the master window maker of America. He was showing me the "Love Window," which since that day has been installed as one of the five great fifty-foot windows which he is making for the Princeton Chapel.

He told me of an experience he had had with an inarticulate Italian violinist in the Boston Symphony over that "Love Window." The violinist was standing in front of that beautiful story of Christ and his love for humanity, depicted in gleaming, singing sunlit glass symbolism. He was moved and moved deeply by its inner meaning. The light poured through it. He remained silent for fifteen minutes or more. The tears rolled down over his cheeks. Then he

turned to Mr. Connick and said: "Is it that you know Brahms' First Symphony?"

Mr. Connick said, "I do!"

Another pregnant pause, and then the musician said: "Is it that you remember that place—where —the sky—it opens?"

When Mr. Connick told me this story he added, "That man spoke my language."

And may I say in closing this treatment on preaching that the preacher who speaks that language to humanity, the preacher who is enough of a mystic to slit the sky open for humanity, who has seen it open for himself—that preacher will be speaking a language that humanity in bulk understands; and humanity will be saying of that preacher, "That man speaks my language."

"Is it that you remember—the place—where the sky—it opens?" Preacher? Is it that you can put that spirit of Christ into symbol, experience, words, phrases, poetry, and fact; into a "Love Window" when you preach through which the sun will shine, with a strange and radiant glory? Then surely your sermons shall be windows of Love. Your sermons shall be what Mr. Connick calls his "singing glass." Then surely shall they "mount up with wings like the eagle" and those who hear them shall also rise to new heights; and in your ministry and your preaching "there shall be wings."

If each piece of the glass of word, phrase, poem, and fact and symbolism is filled into that sunlit

window of love we call a sermon, designed in love, and colored with red and gold and purple through illustration and parable, then shall that Sermon-Window be made of "singing glass" and perhaps "the lost radiance of the Christian religion" may come back to our preaching.

XVI

PREACHING AND POETRY

Lucius H. Bugbee

It is my conviction that preaching must be shot through and through with poetic thought and feeling in order adequately to express the values of religion.

Among the many elements that enter into the background of successful and worthful preaching, not the least important are a poetic insight, a kindling imagination, and a sense of beauty and harmony in the use of words to express both thought and emotion.

There is a poetic and there is a prosaic way of expressing almost anything. Someone has observed that water may be described by a chemical formula—the familiar H_2O—but water may also be described as clear and sparkling. Both statements are true. The second, however, is suggestive, kindling, thought-creating.

It is this thought-awakening, emotion-kindling, picture-making quality in preaching that I want to emphasize as a valuable if not necessary element in the presentation of the religious message.

It is a common observation that poets and prophets have a more permanent place in human

history than soldiers and statesmen. Why is this true? Why do we continue to go to school to the former long after the latter are forgotten? I am inclined to think the answer lies in this statement: Those to whom the world is a parable are nearer the truth than those to whom it is only a complex of physical facts and forces.

Apparently, the wisest science supports this statement. A recent book by a distinguished English scientist entitled *The Nature of the Physical World* begins with some such sentence as this: "I am sitting in two chairs, writing at two tables, using two pens." What does he mean? He means that the objects he sees and touches and which appear solid and substantial are in reality not so. They are only the shadows and symbols of the deeper reality. The author continues: "Modern physics has by delicate tests and remorseless logic assured me that my second, invisible, scientific table is the only one which is really there." In other words, the new physics sees a world of symbols and shadows where we are accustomed to see a world of commonplace everyday experience.

We will all agree, I think, that a poem or a picture, a bit of music, a piece of sculptured marble or even a clever story will frequently convey to our minds an idea or an emotion that plain, prosaic statement or logical argument can never express.

Now, religion has something to contribute to

the world's life which cannot be adequately expressed in the exact terms of science or in the statements and definitions of ordered thought.

Plato, when his thought had followed out as far as it would go, when his intellect had reached its limit and there still seemed to be something left to be said, would frequently resort to a story or fable to express that something remaining unsaid.

Jesus used the same method. He stated truth in plain terms as far as language would permit and his listeners were able to understand; then he frequently resorted to a story. Indeed, he was the Prince of Story-tellers, seeking to convey to the minds of his hearers by this picture method that for which plain statements were inadequate. "He spake many things unto them in parables."

All of which simply means that in our experience some things are expressible, that is, we can talk about them in plain terms—and many other things are inexpressible.

To put it in another way: there are a measurable aspect of life and an unmeasurable aspect. I think that is what we mean when we say life is made up of both material and spiritual elements. There are in our experience some things that can be measured and weighed and some things that can never be measured. Let me illustrate what I mean: By the use of instruments of surveying I can, if I am wise enough, measure exactly the

number of acres in a given section of country. But there is no standard by which I can measure the charm and the beauty of the landscape which that section of country affords, with the sunlight soft upon its fields and meadows and glistening afar upon its distant waters. It represents a beauty which is quite beyond all exact expression.

I can, if I am skillful enough, accurately measure the number of vibrations upon the strings of an instrument, but there is no mathematical formula by which I can measure the quality of that music. I cannot say that one piece of music is exactly three times as beautiful as another.

One can determine all the chemical and physical constituents in a rose, a buttercup, or a daisy, but there is no method of scientific approach or instruments so delicate as to enable me to determine that the rose is ten times more fragrant or beautiful than the buttercup.

In a word, then, I can measure the quantitative values, but I cannot measure the qualitative values in my experience.

Herein lies a distinction between science and religion which it would help us to keep in mind. It would clear up many confusions and misunderstandings. The realm of science is quantitative. It deals with those things that can be measured or weighed. If an object has length, breadth, and thickness, science can deal with it. If a force can be measured, if the vibrations of light and electricity can be determined, science can deal

with them. But the realm of religion is qualitative and quality you cannot determine by any scientific test. It can be appraised, but it cannot be measured. Science gives us a representation of the reality of our lives which is like a diagram or blueprint or map. We need that. It charts some things accurately for us. Religion gives to us a representation of reality which is like a poem or a picture or a piece of music.

Let me commend for your reading a book by Canon Streeter, of Oxford, entitled *Reality*. It is popularized philosophy of a very high order. To make clear what I am saying, I want to use an illustration from this book: "I wish to explain something about Venice to a friend who has never been there, and there are readily accessible both the plan of the city in Baedeker's guide and Turner's famous pictures. Which will be the more useful? It depends entirely upon the immediate purpose of our conversation. If my sole object is to show him the exact position of an hotel which I recommend, the plan is what I want; the picture is worthless. If I wish to prove that Venice is well worth a visit, or if my aim is to suggest to him an attitude of mind which will enable him to get the most profit from a visit, the picture is the thing. But if I want to convey to him the best idea I can of the place as a whole, I shall use both plan and picture."[1]

So both science and religion, both prose and

[1] Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

poetry are required for the fullest possible appreciation of the meaning and significance of the life we live. If we could get that deeply rooted in our thought, many confusions would pass away.

The inner quality of life, then, cannot be measured or weighed. There are no instruments delicate enough, no scales accurate enough for such a purpose. Efforts are being made to develop methods of recording thought and emotions, but one cannot say that there is any likelihood of our ever being able to determine the quality of life by any such mechanical means. It must be represented or expressed in some other way. Not by mathematics but by art, for here we have to think pictorially, and for this there must be a measure of imaginative insight.

This is peculiarly the function of preaching as well as of art and of music. For this reason these three realms of expression have been very closely bound together. They go hand in hand. Art and music have always been the handmaids of the religious message.

It is almost startling to discover how accurately and truly these three together represent the quality and spirit of any age. If you wished to make an estimate of the material resources of a country, you would naturally make note of its mines, its forests, its factories. But suppose you wished to determine what was the real spirit or character of that nation, then you would make a study of its literature, its music, its art, its

religion. For these represent that something in the nation's life which cannot be put into statistics or expressed in exact terms.

Very likely our prevailing jazz age, with its syncopated type of music, literature, art, and even religion, is a more accurate portrayal of the quality and character of modern life than we would really care to admit.

Naturally, then, the message of religion is full of symbols, pictures, poems, hymns. Its rites and ceremonies are simple forms of the drama. It all seeks to objectify for us an inward and invisible spirit. The literature of religion contains much of the world's greatest poetry and drama. The Bible is full of it. What immortal pictures the parables contain!

The sacraments of the church are dramatized poems, picturing before our minds certain fundamental truths which cannot be put into exact terms. All our forms of worship are of this character.

And the buildings which we erect as places of worship are, as far as it is possible to make them, full of the most beautiful symbolism. We have it in the very form of architecture, in the art of windows, in the poetry of the service, and in the harmony of the music. The cathedrals of the Old World have been called "poems in stone," and such indeed they are, for they represent in forms of beauty and strength the immeasurable values of the human spirit. Is it not reasonable

to infer, then, that the preaching of religion should be full of this same kindling quality? We miss much in effective sermonizing if we approach these values of religion with the literal-mindedness of logic and of science and expect to find in them only exact statements and definitions.

If reality has a qualitative as well as a quantitative aspect, if goodness, beauty, and truth count for as much at least in life as money and materials and merchandise, then a cold, abstract scientific presentation of it will simply fail to express it.

No one can define God exhaustively. Indeed, it has been well said that to define him is to lose him, for he escapes us when we resort to definitions. There are no terms in which we can adequately express our thought of him. But the picture in the story of the prodigal son gives to us with a flash of insight a symbolic representation of his character which we could ill afford to lose.

There is no exact formula in which to describe the relation between God and man. It evades analysis. But the stories that cluster about the nativity and the incarnation will always live in our thought as beautiful and tender pictures of the loving interest and care with which God stoops down to share the lowly life of man.

All recognize in true, sacrificial love the greatest thing in the world. It cannot be reduced to a formula or a definition. But the story of Cal-

vary and of what happened upon its cross paints for us the picture of such sacrificial devotion in vivid and unforgettable colors. Perhaps that story has done more to soften the heart and change the life of humanity than all philosophy and science combined.

Religion, then, is transcendent poetry. It deals with values which cannot be expressed in plain and practical prose, in commonsense definitions or the mathematical formulas of ordinary speech and thought. As long as the stars shine beyond our reach, as long as the universe is too large to be measured by our yardstick, so long is there room for mystery and poetry and prophecy.

It is for this reason the poet and the prophet have a more permanent and useful place in history than the soldier and the statesman. And for the same reason the preaching which is saturated with kindling imagination, poetic insight, and unforgettable visualizations of truth will best represent the enduring values of the Christian message.

"The seasons change, the winds they shift and veer;
The grass of yesteryear
Is dead; the birds depart; the groves decay;
Empires dissolve, and peoples disappear;
Song passes not away.

"Captains and conquerors leave a little dust;
And kings a dubious record of their reign;
The swords of Cæsar they are less than rust;
The poet and the prophet, they remain."

XVII

GREAT BOOKS AND GREAT PREACHING

EDGAR DEWITT JONES

I CANNOT remember a time when I was not interested in preachers and books. The most honored guests in our home were preachers, and the best libraries in the neighborhood were those of the ministers. It was a notable day for me when, as a nine-year-old boy, a Presbyterian minister took me into his library, bade me to make myself at home, and left me there. He had, I suppose, five hundred volumes, but to my boyish vision the number seemed five thousand. All a tremble with excitement I sat and gazed at the booklined walls. Presently I got up, crossed the room, and ran my hand caressingly over the backs of half a dozen volumes. Timidly I ventured to take down a book from the highest shelf and to open it — a copy of *Tom Brown at Oxford.*

To this day a visit to the library of a great preacher or scholar is an event. I recall a golden evening spent in Dublin with Mr. George W. Russell, the famous "Æ," poet, painter, and philosopher, "the bearded Plato," editor, the Irish statesman. We sat in his studio-library, a half-finished portrait of Erskine Childers on an

easel in one corner of the room, and adorning the shelved walls Russell's literary treasures. I can still hear the music of his voice as he read passages from Lady Gregory, and his great contemporary William Butler Yeats. I love to live over again an hour that I spent amid Lynn Harold Hough's books in the study of his church, and a three-hour visit on a winter's afternoon in his third-floor library at his residence. I would rather see the outside of a real preacher's library any time than the inside of a multimillionaire's bank book.

Gossip about books and bookmen never tires a book-lover. It is fascinating to read that when Woodrow Wilson left the White House his library had increased to the extent of eight thousand volumes. What kind of books did the President buy and read during the purgatorial years of the Great War? One wonders how many of those volumes were presented by admirers of Mr. Wilson, or by authors and publishers. And what an eccentric habit Phillips Brooks had, of throwing a book out of a car window as soon as he had finished it. Why throw away any book worth reading, why? Surely, it was a lucky day for the section hands and track walkers who were on duty when Bishop Brooks traveled their way.

Ours is a bookish calling, and has been from the beginning. When the greatest of the apostles was facing death in a prison cell at Rome he requested Timothy to fetch his great cloak, his

books, and especially his parchments. Under similar circumstances William Tyndale, the illustrious scholar and triumphant Christian, was more specific. From his prison cell at Vilvorde, he wrote a friend asking, for Jesus' sake, "a warmer cap, something to patch his woolen leggings, and above all, his Hebrew Bible, grammar and dictionary." These are impressive pictures of aged scholar-saints longing for their literary treasures at the time of sunset and evening star. It is good to look on them and muse a while. But there are other pictures fully as impressive and inspiring—pictures of buoyant youth dreaming golden dreams, and facing the world of great books, eager for high adventuring and exploration.

If I had the ear of young preachers, I would advise them early in their careers to make the literary acquaintance of Sir William Robertson Nicoll. This illustrious churchman, theologian, editor, and bookman supreme finished his earthly course May 4, 1923, murmuring to his nurse, "I believe everything that I have written about immortality." Famed as editor of the British Weekly, friend and companion of the most eminent literary men of his day, no other churchman-author of the past fifty years had so extensive an acquaintance with books or wrote more delightfully on literary subjects. His library of twenty-five thousand volumes was as unique as it was intriguing. His judgments and opinions of books

were sound and revealing, his library foibles fascinating. When he set off on a journey, whether short or long, Nicoll's pockets bulged with books. On lengthy itineraries, picking up odd volumes along the way, he would, "departing, leave behind" him, in various hotels, articles of clothing, shirts, collars, hosiery, that he might make room for his beloved books. As a reader of amazing speed he outdistanced Theodore Roosevelt, who read a page at a glance. Nicoll read at the rate of forty-thousand words an hour, after the manner of old Dr. Sam Johnson, "tearing the bowels out of a book," and he never forgot what he read.

It is not possible to appreciate Sir Robertson Nicoll as man of letters and theologian unless one knows something of his father, the Rev. Harry Nicoll, M.A. Here was a quaint personality and the most noted bookman of his day in rural Scotland. At the suggestion of Lord Roseberry, Doctor Nicoll published in 1910 a little book of ninety-six pages entitled *My Father—An Aberdeenshire Minister.* The volume is scarce, but it is worth all the trouble that it may take to turn up a copy. The Rev. Mr. Nicoll, Sr., was the faithful shepherd of a little flock in an obscure Scotch village. He never had an income quite equal to two hundred pounds a year. He lived and died a man of modest means, yet he acquired a library of seventeen thousand volumes under one roof. And such a library! How did

he do it? Nobody knows! The saving ways of a Scotchman are past finding out. Sir Robertson lists the books that his father bought in the course of a year, an unbelievably long and distinguished list. On Sundays the old scholar sat in a room where there were none but books concerning religion. He was never out of the Greek Testament, and at his death possessed about a hundred different editions. One of the old scholar's maxims was, "You are never safe with only one copy of a good book," and he acted on this maxim. From such a home and such a father came Robertson Nicoll, greatest bookman of his day.

At the outset let me mislead no one by the lure of immense private libraries. Where a Theodore Parker gathers together thirteen thousand volumes, a George H. Morrison, five thousand choice titles, and the Nicolls—father and son—forty thousand, the average minister of a bookish bent will be fortunate if he numbers his treasures by the hundreds instead of the thousands. For, after all, the value of a collection of books depends on quality, not on the numbers of titles. Think of Abraham Lincoln's great little library in that formative period of his life. Only five books, but such books! *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Æsop's Fables*, Weems' *Life of Washington*, the Holy Scriptures!

The contents of Lincoln's few books passed like the iron atoms of the blood into the fiber of the

man and help to account for his place in the sun.

To return now to Sir Robertson Nicoll. This man of letters is worthy to become the literary mentor of preachers, because he himself was a preacher of marked ability. For twelve years he was the minister of a Free Church congregation in Scotland, and after he became editor of the British Weekly and renowned as editor and critic, he preached often on notable occasions. In 1906 Doctor Nicoll published a volume of sermons entitled *The Lamp of Sacrifice.* The titles will indicate the character of this sermonic volume. Here is a cluster of them, "Not Afraid of Sackcloth," "Gethsemane, the Rose Garden of God," "The Watershed," "The Message for Midnight," "The Homing of the People," "Aspects of the Mystical Union," "The Frankness of Jesus Christ," "The Course of True Love"—these are great sermons, and the influence of great books is in evidence on almost every page. The sermons are sturdily evangelical, and they are steeped in literature. The pages scintillate with references to George Eliot, R. L. Stevenson, Emerson, St. Augustine, Socrates, Carlyle, Huxley, Dean Church, Renan, Colenso, Sidney Smith, Watts-Dunton, Spurgeon, R. W. Dale, Marcus Dods, Mark Rutherford, John Wesley, McCheyne, Charles Wesley, Heine, Homer, Milton, James Smetham, Tennyson, Lightfoot, Whitefield, Professor Guyot, Cotton Mather, Coleridge, Lord Lytton,

John Eliot, Arthur Butler, Robert Hall, John Foster, Chalmers, Sir George Trevelyan, Cowper, Goldwin Smith, Charlotte Bronté, Paley, Romanes, Darwin, George MacDonald, Madam Guyon, Abelard, Heloise, Shakespeare, Ruskin, Archbishop Tait, Savonarola, Ibsen, Browning, Wagner, Max Nordau, Socinus, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Zinzendorf, Adam Clarke, Henry Martin, Bunyan, John Morely, and Bishop Wescott.

Doctor Nicoll ranked biography as first in importance and value. His own library contained five thousand volumes of a biographical nature. He could say with Doctor Johnson, "The biographical part of literature is what I love most." It was his habit to read every biography that came under his notice, and he once said that of the many thousand books of this kind that he had read, not one had failed to teach him something. It was Nicoll's belief that biography often gave a key to the real man or woman obtainable nowhere else. Sir Robertson tried his own clever hand in this fascinating field and wrote a delightful life of the Rev. John Watson, "Ian Maclaren," his devoted friend. He also wrote *Princes of the Church*, brilliant studies in his charming style of Charles H. Spurgeon, Henry Drummond, Hugh Price Hughes, Frederick W. Robinson, R. W. Dale, George Matheson, Bishop Wescott, Joseph Parker, Alexander Whyte, Cardinal Vaughan, and other masters of the preachèd Word.

Nicoll was once requested to name the five supreme biographies in the English language. Now, to ask anybody to name the five greatest anything is presumptuous, and some men of parts refuse to answer such questions, and no wonder. But Nicoll, steeped in biographical lore, named "the five greatest" immediately, and in the following order. (1) Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, (2) Lockhart's *Sir Walter Scott*, (3) Mrs. Gaskell's *Charlotte Brontë*, (4) G. O. Trevelyan's *Macaulay's Life and Letters*, (5) John Morely's *Gladstone*. It would be hard to find fault with this list and difficult to improve it. Some years before he died Nicoll confessed that he had read Boswell's *Johnson* through at least twenty times and Lockhart's *Scott* through at least a dozen times.

The primacy of biography is generally conceded. In his essay on "Biography" Phillips Brooks averred that he would rather have written a great biographical work than any other kind. In this essay he takes issue with John Ruskin, who held "that the lives in which the public are interested are hardly ever worth writing." Twenty-five years ago ministers young and old were reading Dr. Hillis' *Great Books as Life Teachers*. Published in 1899, that little book had passed through twenty-one editions by 1904. There are eleven chapters, the first being introductory and general. Of the ten subjects which follow, a chapter devoted to each, Doc-

tor Hillis chose three notable novels, two specimens of great poetry, one charming essayist and critic, and five studies in biography, to wit: Henry Drummond, Lord Shaftesbury, Frances E. Willard, David Livingstone, William E. Gladstone. The proportion is significant, is it not?—five biographies to three of fiction, two of poetry, and one of essays.

Early in my ministry I bought *The Recollections of a Long Life*, by Dr. Theodore Cuyler. I do not know how many times I read that book, but I think I could pass an examination upon its contents, although I have but peeped into its pages of recent years. I have kept this volume in the hands of young men contemplating the ministry, theological students, and preachers in their first pastorates. As often as this book comes in it goes out again to charm and inspire, to encourage and possibly "stab wide-awake" some listless, lazy pastor. A more recent autobiographical work and a weightier volume, both physically and intellectually than Doctor Cuyler's, is Dr. George A. Gordon's *My Education and Religion*. What a liberal education it would be for young men contemplating the ministry if they might acquire in the early twenties their own copy of Doctor Gordon's story of a life opulent in those values that matter most—life, education, religion, friendships.

The limits of this paper will not admit of extended notices of biographies, but permit me to

cite *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, by G. F. Barbour. It is a bulky volume, with more than six hundred pages. The story of the eminent Scotch minister and bookman is enchantingly told. His boyhood, college days, the beginning of his ministry, his long pastorate at Free St. Georges, his glorious friendships, habits of study, adventures in preaching, his charming letters, comprise this volume—thirty chapters of unalloyed delight. No minister can read such a book and not be a better preacher. Here was a master sermonizer, a tireless pastor, a discriminating book-lover, a great human being. What industry as a student! What laborious research! How he worked to perfect his style! He was a growing preacher to the end.

Can any minister of the gospel read this letter from Doctor Whyte, written to one of his assistants, and be unmoved by it? " . . . I pray that you may have a happy day; and may both get good and do good. And that it may be so—will you take a word from an old pulpit hand? Your sermon has been long ready; but be up earlier than usual to meditate and pray over it. Steep every sentence of it in the Spirit. Take the title of one of Newman's sermons as your prayer and aim all the day; 'The salvation of the hearer, the motive of the preacher.' Preach as if it were your last sermon, and your first will be memorable, both to you and to the people. Beseech for a special blessing on your first sermon

in that pulpit. And throw all you are into it; into the delivery of it. I am not afraid for its matter, its language. . . . Do not despise delivery, falling back upon matter. The matter is dead without delivery. 'Delivery! Delivery! Delivery!' said Demosthenes to the aspirant. You able fellows are tempted to despise delivery as being 'popular.' I implore you to rise above that delusion, and to do your very best by your message by delivering it in your best style. And pray after it. We are tempted to pray before preaching, because we are afraid of the people and at our work; but prayer for ourselves and the people after preaching is much neglected. Do not neglect either. And go on. Your own heart will tell you more and better. With great regard."

Doctor Nicoll put a premium on published sermons. He had above a thousand volumes of this kind and made the rather remarkable statement that he could part more easily with most of the other books of his library than the sermonic literature. It was Nicoll who discovered Percy Ainsworth and wrote an appreciation to that gifted preacher's *The Pilgrim Church and Other Sermons.* It was this distinguished bookman who encouraged the publication of Father Stanton's sermons and many lesser-known volumes. Nicoll ranks Spurgeon's sermons close to the top. In his published letters there are numerous allusions to Spurgeon's preaching, and he once said that,

whatever befell him, he proposed to keep near by some volumes of Spurgeon, some of Neale, and all the volumes of Dora Greenwell. In one place he lists Spurgeon's sermons with that of LaCordaire. That Doctor Nicoll read other men's sermons is indicated in at least one of his own sermons. In his discourse on "The Course of True Love," preached from John 3. 16, at the opening of the North United Free Church, in Aberdeen, August, 1905, Nicoll says: "In expounding this text I shall adopt the divisions of a celebrated preacher. We have here (1) the Lake; (2) the River; (3) the Pitcher; (4) the Draught. The Lake, God so loved the World; the River—that he gave his only begotten Son; the Pitcher—that whosoever believeth on him; the Draught—shall have everlasting life." The "celebrated preacher" was Alexander Maclaren, the most consummate analyst of biblical texts the world has known, and I am not forgetting Robertson of Brighton.

Speaking of Robertson and his genius in sermonic divisions: The first year I was out of college a brother preacher held a series of evangelistic services for me. He preached a sermon one evening on the text: "Sleep on now, and take your rest . . . Rise up, let us go." He divided the sermon, or, rather, the text, into two divisions, namely: (1) The Irreparable Past, (2) The Available Future. I was immediately impressed by the singular felicity of that twofold division.

Up to that time I had not observed that our pulpit guest was particularly gifted in this sort of thing, but when he struck off this masterful division I sat up straight and took notice. Of course, when I found Robertson, which I did less than a year after this episode, I discovered the source of my friend's inspiration. If there are to be any skeletons in the sermonic closet of the preacher, by all means let them be Robertson's or Maclaren's.

Alexander Maclaren will long remain an ideal and idol to preachers everywhere. I knew a young minister with an ambition to excel in preaching, who purchased early in his career the *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, in twenty-five volumes. This set, as most every minister knows, is the cream of Maclaren's sermonic thought for more than forty years. This young pastor kept his Maclarens in his bedroom and close enough to his bed that he might have "Mac" the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning. To this day that minister, now past middle age, acknowledges an unpayable debt to Maclaren of Manchester. He still reads him, not so frequently nor with such eagerness as in former days, but with gratitude and deep satisfaction.

Dr. J. H. Jowett's opinion as to the study of other men's sermons is arresting. In his Yale lectures this famous homilist states that having selected his text and theme, it was his habit to examine the sermons by other preachers on the

same subject. He would ask himself, "How would Newman regard this subject? How would Spurgeon approach it? How would Dale deal with it? By what road would Bushnell come up to it? Where would Maclaren take his stand to look at it? Where would Alexander Whyte lay hold of it?" Such a statement is illuminating and revealing.

The temptation to become catalogical just here is strong, but it must be resisted. I have in mind twenty-five volumes of sermonic literature that I could wish to list, authors and titles. Instead, let me advise that the young minister purchase, as soon as he can, the sermonic output of the masters of pulpit discourse, both new and old. Buy the works of authorities on the fine art of preaching as fast as you can. Get Garvie, Cadman, Dargan, Hoyt, Hutton, Wilkinson, and others. Specialize in the Yale Lectures on Preaching. This series is to preaching what Raphael is to painting, or Shakespeare to letters. I love to think of this noble series among my own books as "my shelf supreme."

The great novelists were appraised highly by Doctor Nicoll. Like most Scotchmen, he was inordinately fond of Sir Walter Scott, and claimed to have read *Rob Roy* sixty times. He greatly enjoyed the now little read books of George Macdonald. He reveled in Dickens and near the end of his life wrote, "You cannot have too much Dickens, but *Pickwick*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*,

David Copperfield, and *Dombey and Son* are perhaps the best." It was his habit to read the best of the new novels as they came off the press and his assessment of the French and Russian school was favorable. Alexander Maclaren's familiarity with the Waverly Novels was so pronounced that latterly he could not read them; Dumas continued to be a favorite with him to the end. Doctor Guthrie, almost as famous in his day as Chalmers, restricted himself to four of Sir Walter's novels every year. Dinsdale T. Young, venerable Wesleyan preacher, preferred George Meredith to all others and regarded him as pre-eminently the preacher's novelist. Alexander Whyte, regarded by Nicoll as the most eminent preacher bookman of Scotland, was an early champion of Stevenson and Barrie.

The influence of reading great fiction can be traced in much of the great preaching. Such an essay as that of Dr. John Hutton on "The Sense of Sin in Great Literature" suggests one way in which the preacher's familiarity with fiction may be fruitfully used. But quite apart from the homiletic reason for reading the best fiction is the sheer delight that comes from such pleasant recreation. Take such a writer, for instance, as Anthony Trollope, illustrious Victorian. His "Barchester Towers" series gives a picture of English clerical life nowhere surpassed. There are six titles in the series and in this order: 1. *The Warden;* 2. *Barchester Towers;* 3. *Doctor Thorne;* 4. *Framely Par-*

sonage; 5. *The Small House at Allington;* 6. *The Last Chronicle of Barset.* Who can forget the rather pompous but likeable Archdeacon Grantly, the lordly Duke of Omnium, and his grand manner; the shrewish and pernicious Mrs. Proudly, wife of the henpecked bishop by that name? George Eliot is a writer that no minister of the gospel can afford to ignore. Thackeray holds his own, and Victor Hugo still has his high place. Yet I question any need to encourage the average preacher who loves books to read fiction. Is there not a greater need to curb his tendencies in this direction and the counsel to practice self-control and discrimination?

Nicoll was at home with the poets. He was an authority on Shakespeare. He put Browning on a pedestal and ranked John Milton among the elect. Browning has long been a prime favorite with preachers. Hugh Price Hughes knew his Browning by heart. John Hutton dedicates his "That the Ministry Be Not Blamed" to a brother preacher "who in our youth introduced me to 'Browning.'" Joseph Fort Newton names Browning in the list of books that most influenced his life. Doctor Hough is a Browning scholar of distinction. F. D. Kershner puts the plays of Shakespeare next to the Bible, and names next the poems of Robert Browning. I have yet to see anything to replace *The Great Poets and Their Theology,* by Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong. There are nine stimulating chapters on these lords

of language: Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth, Browning, Tennyson.

Dr. Nicoll was a loyal friend of the minor poets. It was a thing of pride with him that he owned as many volumes of the lesser poets of the Victorian period as any other collector. He dreamed a dream of some day writing an anthology in which no piece of poetry should appear that had appeared in any other anthology. Every discerning preacher will sooner or later owe a debt to the lesser-known poets, even to vagrant verse. Indeed, the minor poets are much like the so-called minor prophets—their content bulks small, but in quality and essence it is immortal.

Nicoll read history continually and had at his tongue's end historical episodes, events, and epochs. A knowledge of history is the "open sesame" to mines richer than Coleonda. In this connection I have been interested in a statement made by Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis shortly before he died. It will be a long time before the American pulpit sees again the like of Doctor Hillis. He combined rare homiletic genius with a flair for beautiful phrasings. He touched nothing homiletically that he did not adorn. His sermons, lectures, even his after-dinner speeches, were opulent with literary lore, historical incident, and biographical episode. A few months preceding his death, Doctor Hillis, in conversation with a preacher friend, said that if he were to begin his

ministerial life over again, he would make for his own use an outline of the world's history, century by century, period by period, and that with such a background he would enrich and empower his pulpit utterance.

Dr. Lynn Harold Hough has done precisely what Doctor Hillis suggested. I know of no man in the pulpit anywhere with such an intimate and rewarding knowledge of history, epoch by epoch, century by century. Is it the eighteenth century? Then Doctor Hough presents those illustrious figures in enchanting array. The great Doctor Johnson, the eloquent Burke, the impecunious Goldsmith, the apostolic Wesley, the courtly Chesterfield, the fiery Whitefield, the inimitable Garrick—as you listen to Doctor Hough you enter this glorious company. You are in good old Londontown and you stroll along Fleet Street unabashed and sober. When Doctor Hough was the preacher at Central Methodist Church, Detroit, people thronged his services from all parts of the city, attracted by his extraordinary knowledge of letters and history. A student who came every Sunday from Ann Arbor explained that he attended his classes at the University of Michigan to get credits, and listened to Doctor Hough in order to learn history.

Just now Arthur John Gossip is a preacher much in the public eye. His sermons, which fairly drip with the honey of literature, are eagerly read. I should like to see his library. I know nothing of

Doctor Gossip's habits as a student, but I suspect he is an omnivorous reader and that he has a distinguished library. One day I opened his volume *The Galilæan Accent*, and turned at random to the chapter entitled "What Happens at Calvary." Now, this is a subject that ordinarily would not seem to yield to literary reference. One would not expect to find in such a sermon many allusions to books and authors. Yet, in this single sermon Doctor Gossip makes eleven literary references as follows: Bernard Shaw, Erskine of Linlathen, Hegel, Plato, Stevenson, Bunyan, George Adam Smith, J. H. Newman, Browning, Mozley, and the Theologia Germanica. Thus drama, history, poetry, fiction, philosophy, theology are focused on the stupendous theme of the cross.

May I not now go a little more into detail in order to illustrate what a background of literature can do for a modern preacher of great ability. In *The Victory of God*, by the Rev. James Reid, M.A., of Eastbourne, England, there are twenty-five sermons, powerful, biblical to the core, not only evangelical but evangelistic in a large way, varied in topic, and extensive in range. Look at the fifth sermon of the collection based on Acts 14.27. "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them." The thesis of the sermon is that God is the key to every great experience and that the discovery of this fact is the secret of overcoming life.

The sermon opened with the thought that nothing reveals a man so much as the kind of record he keeps in his mind of life's experiences and the things that he remembers to tell his friends. What did the early Christians talk about when they came together after hardship and painful episodes? By the nature of their reports, the things they rehearsed to their companions, the spirit and outlook on life—by these tokens are they to be judged. Well, they were God conscious; God was in the center of everything that happened to them. If God was for them, who could be against them? Such is the trend of thought as the sermon opens. The first literary allusion appears on the third page, the preacher having been speaking, I suppose, two or three minutes. Suddenly grand old John Milton steps into the picture, his eyesight gone, but his spiritual vision keener than before. A reference to this great Puritan is almost always thrilling. There is something sublime about his figure—sturdy, stalwart, brave! On the same page, or almost in the same breath, enters Robert Louis Stevenson, buoyant, breezy adventurer, bold believer; and Stevenson tells of an old sailor's summary of life which he had worked out in an emblem, an anchor at each side—"an anchor stands for hope—and in the middle the word 'Thankful.'" From this episode the preacher develops the thought that where there is inward joy and peace, no matter how arduous the toil or bitter the experience,

there is a deep and an abiding satisfaction in the achievement. To strengthen and illuminate this point he quotes from Matthew Arnold two stanzas that are bathed in what Doctor Jacks has called "the lost radiance of Christianity":

> "'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
> Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green;
> And the pale weaver through his windows seen
> In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.
>
> "I met a preacher there I knew, and said,
> 'Ill and o'er worked, how fare you in this scene?'
> 'Bravely,' he said, 'for I of late have been
> Much cheered by thoughts of Christ, the living Bread.'"

And now George Eliot comes into the sermon. She is given credit for the sentiment that there is a kind of joy in life "so like pain that we can only tell it from pain by its being what our souls desire above everything else because we know that it is good." Following close is an allusion to "the author of 'De Profundis,'" who, our preacher says, traced his fall to the fact that he always chose the sunny side of the street and made a fine art of cultivating pleasure. Poor Oscar Wilde! his name is not mentioned by the speaker, and perhaps it was art to withhold it, but to those who read this sermon, no less than to those who heard it, the reference to that remarkable genius, whose feet were caught in the quicksands of lust while his head companied with the stars, is startling and sobering. Next there are two pages and a half with not a single literary

allusion, but of close cogent reasoning, interpretation, exposition, and straight-from-the-shoulder preaching. This is followed by a lovely paragraph in which the vision of Christ is described as growing more radiant year by year as the face of Beatrice became to Dante the higher he ascended toward paradise. "Listen!" exclaims the preacher, " 'Then were the disciples filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.' Do we know anything of that experience, the joy of God's presence, the power and freedom of the soul which is increasingly God-controlled and God-possessed?" The sermon draws to a close; the preacher asks his hearers if they remember the noble plea which Jeanie Deans, in *The Heart of Midlothian*, made to the Queen after that long journey south to beg for her sister's pardon. The quotation is partly in Scotch dialect and gains in tenderness because of that fact. Again the preacher is talking about pain and suffering. "Is not the place of pain in which God sets us with others a whispering gallery in which every syllable of courage or faith may become vibrant with inspiration and find a ready audience?" He answers his own question with these poignant lines:

> "As iron dug from central gloom
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use."

The sermon is nearly done. In the very last

paragraph Admiral Peary, hero of the north pole, is presented and a companion who faced death with him is quoted as saying that "the greatest year of my life" was the year of hardship and suffering with Peary in a dash for the pole. This is distinctly a master touch. You seem to see the unending expanse of snow and ice; you sense the coming of the long, terribly long, six months of darkness, when there is nothing to do except struggle to keep alive, wait for the return of the sun, and with the coming of day come also fresh dangers, hardships, but at last the goal! Thus the preacher closes: "And surely if we learn to grasp the gracious purpose of God in Jesus, the time will come when we shall look back upon life's experience with a new interpretation, and measure it by the values of the cross, and say, 'The Lord hath done great things. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' "

Here is a great preacher preaching out of a background of familiarity with great books. The literary quality and character of this sermon is distinguished, yet there are restraint and the proper proportion. You feel all the while that the speaker has but lightly tapped his literary resources, that even when he does not quote or allude to authors and characters his style has been molded by companionship with immortal books. And this sermon is a good sample of the rest in the volume. Every one of them is marked by the same deft touch, happy allusion, apt

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

quotation. The famed figures of literature pass and repass through the pages. There are charm and vigor; the sermons live.

It is assumed throughout this paper that the supreme book of the preacher is the Bible. It is assumed that the background of great preaching must be essentially biblical. This is the witness of all the preachers supreme. Charles Reynolds Brown, who all of his life has enjoyed the companionship of great books, and who is one of the premier preachers of this generation, says, "The Bible is the one book which has done me more good as a Christian, and as a preacher, than all the other books put together. And the King James Version of the Bible (as opposed to these modern chatty translations in baseball English) and Shakespeare's plays, have done most for whatever style I have in preaching." There can be no great preaching without constant companionship with the Bible. The faithful preacher will always have some portion of the Scriptures under special consideration and study. The sermonic achievements of a Charles E. Jefferson cluster around intensive studies in the Gospels, the Epistles of Saint Paul, the Old Testament books of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The sermonic wealth of Charles H. Spurgeon's long life as a minister of the Word is saturated with Bible lore, freighted with scriptural facts, Christian doctrines. And so it is to the end of the chapter. It is certainly true that no book about the Bible can compen-

sate for the Bible itself. Book-loving ministers can understand the confession of Dr. Andrew Bonar, who sighed and said, "Oh, my books, how they keep me from The Book!"

I venture an intimate personal experience. It happened in old Kentucky. I was sitting up by the bedside of a very sick kinsman. It was my vacation period, but illness in the family circle confined me to the old homestead. As has been my custom for years, I had bought a dozen of the newer books, and with these and a bundle of the latest magazines I arrived at the farm. I came on duty in the sick room at midnight. I was not actually needed, for there was a nurse in charge, a middle-aged German woman. The wants of the sick man were few and he slept most of the time. So I plunged with zest into my new books and magazines. Now, it happened that when I appeared with my books, the nurse appeared with her Bible. While I pored over my latest volumes she sat with The Book, turning the pages slowly and lingering longest amid the Psalms. The first night I read a popular novel to the "bitter end." The second night I read a new biography in which the author stripped his hero of the last vestige of respectability. I also ran rapidly through several magazines, featuring muckraking items. The third night, as the nurse settled herself for the long vigil and opened again The Book, I laid aside my novel, vanished into another room and returned with a King James Version of the Holy

Scriptures. I opened The Book at Isaiah, and read at a single sitting and under conditions that made the reading singularly impressive, the sixty-six chapters. It was very quiet on the farm. Occasionally a dog barked in the distance. There were the bleating of sheep and the weird hooting of an owl. From time to time the sick man stirred uneasily, asked for a drink of water, was served, fell asleep again. As I read from The Book there arose before me the majestic figure of that young man who was born to the purple and became a spokesman for Jehovah in a day when Jerusalem was ready to slay her prophets. I saw him walk with kings nor lose the common touch. I felt the singular beauty of his life and the glory of his testimony. There at the bedside of one whose days had all but ended, the music of those lovely words from the fortieth chapter filled the room and made it a place divine. "They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

How true it is that

> "We search the world for truth; we cull
> The good, the pure, the beautiful
> From graven tomb and written scroll,
> From all old flower-fields of the soul;
> And, weary seekers of the best,
> We come back laden from our quest,
> To find that all the sages said
> Is in the Book our mothers read." [1]

[1] John Greenleaf Whittier. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

XVIII

THE PLAYWRIGHT AS PREACHER

G. Bromley Oxnam

"Patronize the good; damn with the thunders of silence the bad, and never protest." With these words, so much like the flashing line of a Shakespearian play, Frederick Warde, the great actor, answered my question. I had asked, "What attitude should the church take toward plays that are inartistic, salacious, or degrading?" The church would be better off to-day, and perhaps our preaching more effective, had the advice of this scholarly soul been followed.

For centuries the drama lived under the protecting care of the church. It was tragic indeed that commercialism laid its debauching hand upon this lovely art. Too often since that unfortunate hour the drama has appeared no longer a thing of beauty and a joy forever, but, rather, a sorry figure of the street.

Churchmen have attacked the sordid. They have protested too much. Their attacks and protests have given wide publicity to that which is beastly, and spending time in such pursuits they have failed to recognize the true, the good, and the beautiful that are present and have lost an opportunity to strengthen these forces in their

struggle for mastery of the stage. The churchman has also failed to note a new preacher who is in our midst. He wears no Prince Albert, has never been ordained, belongs to no Conference, but is a preacher, nevertheless. I refer to a number of modern playwrights whose mighty messages are gripping the thought life of a rising generation.

A careful study of the technique of the playwright-preacher will be found productive indeed from the standpoint of sermonic construction. The playwright saturates himself in life. He conceives it his function to reveal life as it is. He teaches by indirection. Sin is seen in its dark hideousness. Selfish conduct is traced to its sad consequences. In a day that witnesses a strong movement toward intellectualism in preaching, divorced at times from every "taint" of emotionalism, the playwright-preacher points out the place of emotion in the presentation of truth and, likewise, its power in determining conduct. It is my belief that a study of the drama, not for the purpose of presenting dramatic sermons—though the occasional dramatic sermon may have its place—but for the purpose of mastering the technique of the dramatist, will prove of real value to the student of homiletics.

Lord Dunsany is a playwright-preacher. No doubt he would prefer to be called an artificer in ideas, since he has written:

"Of all materials for labor, dreams are the

hardest, and the artificer in ideas is the chief of workers, who out of nothing will make a piece of work that may stop a child from crying or lead nations to higher things. For what is it to be a poet? It is to see at a glance the glory of the world, to see beauty in all its forms and manifestations, to feel ugliness like a pain, to resent the wrongs of others as bitterly as one's own, to know mankind as others know single men, to know nature as botanists know a flower, to be thought a fool, to hear at moments the clear voice of God."

Dunsany possesses the rare imagination of Yeats, the subtlety of Barrie, the cleverness of Shaw.

The Barony of Dunsany was created by Henry VI, and its present Lord, having seen strenuous service in France, knows life as a poor soul caught in the hell of war as well as a nobleman acquainted with luxury.

He teaches by indirection. Would he have you think of your mother? He studies you, and learns perhaps that when a child you walked in the garden with mother at rose time. To bring back your mother, he creates a lovely scene. It is a garden. There are roses, and you believe the breeze carries perfume. Memory calls forth the hour when as a baby basket-carrier, the image of a sweet mother was impressed indelibly upon your mind—and mother is with you.

He is a playwright-preacher in his fascinating

phantasy entitled "If."[1] When the curtain rises, we find ourselves looking upon a small railway station near London. Two porters are at work. One is surly; the other is not so surly. The less surly one says, "'Ow goes it, Bill?"

The other one replies, "Goes it? 'Ow do you think it goes?"

The conversation progresses until the surly one exclaims, "Nothing ain't right."

It develops that he has been called upon the carpet and reprimanded. When a train reaches a British station the gates to the platform are shut and only the people then upon the platform board the train. It appears that the surly one had allowed a woman to pass through the gate and board the train. He reports the conversation with his superior, saying: "Said I ought to 'av stopped 'er. Thought the train was moving. Thought it was dangerous. Thought I tried to murder 'er, I suppose."

The surly one threatens to quit his job, but upon being advised that he has a family to consider, declares, "Well, anyway, I won't let any more of them passengers go jumping into trains any more, not when they're moving, I won't. When the train gets in, doors shut. That's the rule. And they'll 'av to abide by it."

At that moment, we hear the whistle of the train. True to his promise, the surly one slams the gates. John Beal, a bachelor and a commuter,

[1] By Lord Dunsany. Reprinted by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

comes to the gate. He prepares to pass and says, "Good morning." The surly one replies, "Can't come through. Too late."

I need not repeat the ensuing conversation, save that the surly one states, in true British fashion, "Only doing my duty."

Ten years pass away. John Beal is married. He is in the rug business. It seems he has befriended a strange character by the name of Ali, a Persian perhaps. Ali comes to his home and presents an offering. "It is a token of gratitude, a gift, as it came to me." Ali explains his gift, saying, "He that taketh this crystal, so, in his hand, at night, and wishes, saying, 'At a certain hour let it be'; the hour comes and he will go back eight, ten, even twelve years if he will, into the past, and do a thing again, or act otherwise than he did. The day passes; the ten years are accomplished once again; he is here once more, but he is what he might have become had he done that one thing otherwise."

Throughout the ten years John Beal has remembered with bitterness the porter who would not let him pass through the gate. Perhaps there has rankled in his soul the feeling that is yours when someone has taken the right of way from you in heavy traffic. In any case, we find him wishing.

The third scene is an exact duplicate of the first, save for the fact that this time, instead of the surly one keeping John from passing through

the gate, John catches his train. In the compartment he meets the lovely Miralda. Remember he is unmarried now, because it is ten years back. She wonders if he would mind opening the window. Then she would like to have it shut. Before long the bewitching lady has won and John Beal is off to Persia to help her settle some matters related to an estate. Would you hear of the subsequent adventures of John Beal? Read the play. Suffice it to say now that Lord Dunsany is dealing with the ancient theme of free will. Instead of talking about the power of a man to choose as he sees fit and arguing about the consequences that flow from a given act, Lord Dunsany presents an "if" moment. He makes it perfectly clear that *if-moment decisions carry with them life-time responsibilities.*

Anyone with imagination thinks of if-moments in the field of government. He beholds a small group of patriots pledging their fortunes and their sacred honor. He witnesses the birth of the United States of America. Or again he looks into the face of a man who was acquainted with sorrow, who sensed the suffering of black men; and beholds an if-moment. The decision made in that if-moment preserved the Union and emancipated the slaves. He notes that there are if-moments in the life of the church. It may be that he realizes that the present hour is an ecclesiastical if-moment, that the church must repent of intolerance, purge itself of superstition, abandon

its caste of goodness, become honest in its search for reality, reveal its right to survive in the service that it renders, and present to men a Christlike God, if it is to survive. He knows there are if-moments in the life of an individual. The point that I am trying to stress is this: The playwright-preacher, dealing with a theme by indirection, brings the essential message to his hearers with far greater power than is done by the constant reiteration, "Thus saith the Lord," or "Thou art the man." I would not be misunderstood. There is rightful place for the direct utterance; but the playwright suggests another method of presenting truth, enabling us to eliminate monotony and increase our effectiveness thereby.

A second playwright-preacher is Charles Rann Kennedy. His plays carry a message for our institutional if-moments. In his play "The Terrible Meek" he presents the awful power of meekness. It is a one-act play dedicated "To My Mother. A New Courage. More like woman's. Dealing with life, not death. It changes everything."

The curtain rises in darkness. We hear the low moan of a woman, the curse of a soldier, the order of an officer. The conversation is carried on in the darkness. It seems that a man has been executed. He is the son of the woman. We learn of the strange influence of this poor, broken soul upon both the soldier and the officer. Finally, as the play concludes, there is light. It is a light

behind a hill. Upon the hilltop are three crosses. We behold Mary the mother of Jesus, a Roman soldier, and a Roman officer; and we learn that the meek shall inherit the earth, that the dread power of Cæsar is humbled before the might of Christ, the Terrible Meek.

But it is in "The Servant in the House"[2] that Kennedy is preacher pre-eminent. He presents a problem, considers several solutions, and leads his audience to a final answer that satisfies the mind and inspires action. The problem is How may brotherhood be achieved in society? The House, of course, is society; the Servant none other than the Christ spirit. We behold characters who personify limited conceptions of brotherhood, and note that our failure to enthrone true brotherhood roots fundamentally in our attempt to serve both God and mammon. Kennedy's answer is that of Christ himself. *Brotherhood in society is achieved by removing the spirit of mammon and enthroning the spirit of Jesus.*

The preacher may well note the method whereby the conflict between Christ and mammon is revealed. Phillips Brooks' concept of the sermon is at one with Kennedy's method. It is indeed a matter of "truth through personality." Each character symbolizes an element in the conflict.

We meet Manson, the servant. His name

[2] Excerpts reprinted by permission of the author.

may be a play upon the words "Son of man." He is a butler, in reality the Christ spirit, for us The Servant in the House. The Bishop of Lancashire is the spirit of mammon. He personifies the power of mammon as it contends with the power of Christ for the control of the house. The entire action takes place in the living room of a vicarage. The Vicar is a scholar, a churchman, at heart good, but lost in creed and observance, restless but bound to the wheel, knowing something is wrong but apparently helpless to right it. The Vicar's wife, the sister of the Bishop of Lancashire, is the mammonistic spirit expressed in terms of idolatrous love and ambition, ostensibly for her husband, but in actuality to suggest the blind worship of institutions. She is capable of change, fortunately, and may remain in the redeemed house. But mammon, the Bishop, must be driven out forever. Then there is the drain-man, a brother of the Vicar and of Manson, "gone to pot, erstwhile drunkard, laborer, drain-man." He is the toiling masses of men, crude, but generous at heart, catching a glimmer of a better day, and out to attack causes.

At the very outset Kennedy reveals the varying conceptions of the term "brotherhood." For instance, the Vicar meets the new servant, Manson, and, after an inquiry or two, says:

"My old friend in Brindisi, who recommended you, writes that you bore a very excellent character with your late employer in India; but there

was one matter he didn't mention—no doubt you will recognize its importance in a clergyman's family—he never mentioned your religion."

Manson replies: "I can soon remedy that, sir. My religion is very simple. I love God and all my brothers."

The Vicar, as though trying to ponder this statement, says, almost to himself, "God and your brothers. . . ."

Manson's answer is immediate, "Yes, sir: *all* of them."

The Vicar replies, "That is not always so easy, Manson; but it is my creed too."

Manson extends his hand and says, "Then—Brother!"

The Vicar takes his hand mechanically, and we see immediately the brotherhood the Vicar preaches is not a brotherhood to leap over the barriers of class. It is an idealistic profession, not a practical reality.

Later Robert, the drain-man, comes to care for the drains. He is not welcome in the house of the Vicar, even though the Vicar is his brother. We find him in conversation with Manson. Robert, through the courtesy of Manson, is seated at a table eating breakfast. The Vicar has just left the room after protesting the presence of Robert in the house. Between bites, Robert labors at a joke, saying, "Wouldn't think as I was 'is brother, would yer—not to look at me? But strooth, I am; an' what's more, 'e can't

deny it! There's a lot o' brothers knockin' abaht as people don't know on, eh what? See wot I mean?"

Robert is willing to have Manson, a servant, sit at the table and eat with him, but a little bit later on we see the limitations in his conception of brotherhood, when he declares, "I believe in fighting with my clarss!"

Manson queries, "Oh, against whom?"

"Why, agin all the other clarsses—curse 'em!"

Manson tenderly asks, "Isn't that a bit of the old Robert left, comrade?"

Robert's answer is just "Oh, leave me alone. I cawn't be allus pickin' and choosin' my words! I ain't no scholar—thank God!"

Here Kennedy deals, as in the case of the Vicar, with a brotherhood that is not all-inclusive. It is a brotherhood like that of an organization that prated much of its Americanism and its brotherhood some time since, but, as a friend of mine declared, "In stressing its brotherhood, it dropped the brother and kept the hood."

In the second act Manson, with Robert and the Bishop of Lancashire at the table, rises to describe the New Society. He speaks in terms of the building of a cathedral. The Bishop of Lancashire thinks only in terms of its cost. But Robert begins to understand.

"When you enter it you hear a sound—a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough, and you will learn that it is made up of

the beating of human hearts, of the nameless music of men's souls—that is, if you have ears. If you have eyes, you will presently see the church itself—a looming mystery of many shapes and shadows, leaping sheer from floor to dome. The work of no ordinary builder! . . . The pillars of it go up like the brawny trunks of heroes: the sweet human flesh of men and women is molded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable: the faces of little children laugh out from every corner stone: the terrible spans and arches of it are the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the numberless musings of all the dreamers of all the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness: sometimes in blinding light: now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish: now to the tune of great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. Sometimes, in the silence of the night-time, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead."

We realize that it is costly building, this building of the New Society, and that it will not come for the asking. We must be prepared for the days of deep darkness and the burdens of unutterable anguish. But there will be days too when we shall hear the tune of a great laughter, with heroic shoutings, like the cry of thunder, the hours when we shall build in blinding light.

The play progresses until at last Manson's influence upon the Vicar, upon Robert, upon others in the household, becomes so dominant that he is in a position to ask the Vicar to allow him to become "the lord and master of this house for one little hour." The Vicar agrees. The Vicar's wife gives assent. Without a moment's hesitation, Manson, now the ruler of the house, goes directly to the Bishop of Lancashire and utters a curt command, "I bear you a message from the ruler of this house. Leave it." It is a sublime scene! The spirit of mammon is driven from the house. The Christ stands, his hand lifted in benediction. The House is redeemed.

"The Servant in the House" pleads not alone for brotherhood, but for a serving church, a servant in the house of civilization, at once a living power and a forward-looking institution. The trouble in the house seems to have been associated with the drains. We learn that there is a tomb beneath the church and the vicarage. There are dead men's bones and the odors are noticeable in both church and vicarage. Robert, who has gone into the tomb itself, has heard the organ playing "The Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ, Her Lord." But the structure does not rest upon such foundation. It rises upon sepulchers where lie traditions bound in grave clothes, superstitions carefully embalmed. The play climaxes when Robert and Manson and the Vicar turn to the task, the Vicar crying: "Off

with these lies and make-believes! Off with these prisoner's shackles! They cramp, they stifle me! Freedom! Freedom! This is no priest's work—it calls for a man!" Even his wife cries, "God's might go with you, William! Accept him, Christ!"

And Robert, whose brotherhood until then had not leaped across this barrier, finally takes the Vicar's hand. Strangely enough, the characters standing beside a table find themselves standing in the very form of the cross itself.

The members of the household, who have long expected the coming of the far-famed Bishop of Benares, are told that he is present.

Manson says, "He is here."

The Vicar looks into his face and queries, "What do you mean? Where is he?"

Manson again says, "Here."

And the Vicar asks, "In God's name, who are you?"

Manson's answer is simple, but compelling: "In God's name, your brother."

And we find Christ, church, and labor united in the task of serving men, one in brotherhood, mammon driven out, the Christ spirit ruling, the house redeemed. We preachers await the hour when, with the driving out of the spirit of mammon, in the presence of the glorious reconciliation of brothers, beneath the lifted hand of Christ, the New Society is born.

The complex problem presented by our in-

dustrial if-moment is considered by the preacher-playwrights Karl Capek and Channing Pollock. Capek is a Czechoslovakian, Channing Pollock an American. One uses biting satire, the other close reasoning linked with emotional tenderness. We have heard that men are but machines, that moral rights must bow to economic necessity, that affirmation of a Christian evaluation of life is one thing, its recognition in practice another. Capek faces this conflict in an amazing bit of dramatic satire.

We find ourselves upon an island, where Rossum's Universal Robots are manufactured. It appears that old Rossum had discovered a formula whereby he could make men. His son, of more practical bent, realized that from an industrial point of view "A man is something that feels happy, plays the piano, likes going for a walk, and, in fact, wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary." [3]

At last a machine-man, thoroughly efficient, from the point of view of the materialistic industrialist, was perfected. The manager of the plant discusses the matter with Helena Glory, a lovely girl, who visits the island. He insists that—

"A working machine must not play the piano, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A gasoline motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers is the same thing as

[3] Excerpts reprinted by permission of Samuel French, publisher.

to manufacture gasoline motors. The process must be of the simplest, and the product of the best from a practical point of view. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?"

Helena answers, "Perhaps the one who is most honest and hard working."

The manager contradicts her. "No; the one that is cheapest. The one whose requirements are the smallest. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of work—everything that makes man more expensive. In fact, he rejected man and made the Robot. My dear Miss Glory, the Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul."

Capek leads us into a world of machine men. Helena pities them and secretly changes the formula, introducing an element of sympathy, of aspiration. The machine-men, now possessed of a bit of soul, grow restless. Is there a more terrible scene in drama than the rising of the Robots? They rise to destroy, and Capek, playwright-preacher, in awful satire preaches that man is worth more than a sheep, that he shall not live by bread alone. His preaching carries us further to the fact that the materialist, content with his

machine theory of labor, forgets that labor denied the spiritual will not learn the value of the spiritual, and that when the Robots rise—and rise they will—they will destroy their oppressors; but, more—they will destroy the spiritual values that man has builded through the ages. Capek sees that machine production for naught but production and its consequent financial return is not socially justifiable. The goal must be the production of that which is necessary, useful, or beautiful by free men who know truth, goodness, beauty. *The machine world is upon us. Enlightened selfishness is here. Capek, preacher and prophet, insists that we are doomed unless we supplant selfishness with sacrifice. It is the appeal of Calvary.* The one gleam of hope lies in the love that is born in the soul of two Robots. Capek looks upon them as a new Adam and new Eve who may go forth to possess the new world.

Pollock raises the question, Would a person who endeavored to apply the principles of Jesus in industrial practice be thought a fool? His characters answer the question. *It is Pollock's faith that redemption lies in the foolishness of Jesus and that his teaching, instead of being relegated to the realm of iridescent dreams, must be looked upon as offering solution under sane leadership to the baffling industrial issues of the hour.* There is a splendid scene in the second act when Umanski, perhaps a play upon the

word "humanity," a member of a strike delegation, standing in the home of Mr. Goodkind, the owner of the mine, exclaims, "I work twelve hours—every day . . . thirty years . . . got nothing." The dialogue continues. Benfield, Jerry, Mr. Goodkind, representing the employers, speaking; Umanski replying for the workers.

Benfield: Why should you have? An untrained man—

Jerry: You don't even know English!

Umanski: How I gonna learn English—work twelve hours a day?

Jerry: Nobody asked you to take the job! Nobody asked you to come here! You're not an American!

Umanski: I was an American.

Jerry: (Sneers) When?

Umanski: When I fight . . . in the war.

Goodkind: What do you want?

Umanski: I wanna chance to learn! I wanna chance to live! I wanna see . . . sun!

Jerry: Wha'd'ya mean—*son?*

Goodkind: Your son?

Umanski: God's sun. I never see him. Go to mines—him not up. Work in mines—him not see. Go home—him gone. Got baby five years ago. Never see *him.* Go to mines . . . *him* not up. Come back—*him* asleep. Go home one day—*him* gone.

Goodkind: Dead?

Umanski: My wife say: "Good! Not such many to feed!"

Jerry: When you worked you had enough to eat, didn't you?

Umanski: Yes. Work twelve hours a day and got enough to eat—so can work some more. Always work. Get up—work—come back—sleep—get up—work. Never got time to talk to wife—never got time to talk to nobody—never got nowhere. Never save nothing.

(*Jerry takes out his cigarette case.*)

Umanski: That little box—what you pay for him? Ah, I know; gold. You pay more for him than I got from swing pick thirty years. Me and six families—we live in one house you own. We got one room upstairs; two down cellar. Sleep

there. Eat—cook—wash upstair . See nothing but brick yard, and clothes hang up to dry. Wife—she carry water from yard. Me—I carry potato peeling out front. Him rot. If I don't like that, I quit—and starve!

Jerry: You want to live on Fifth Avenue!

Benfield: And *then* you'd find something to kick about!

Umanski: If I don't like other mans will. Other mans take my job. I got little girl twenty years old. Awful nice little girl. Got gold hair. Got blue eyes. Her take sick. She sorry she's sick. She wanna go church. She ask me: "Pop, buy me new dress for church. Buy me pretty *pink* dress." Where I get him? We hire doctor once, and he say, "Air—sunshine—milk—eggs!" Where I get air—sunshine—milk—eggs? Got no job. My little girl she cough, and cough, and one night she die. I tell you we got right to quit! We got right to hang together! We got right to fight—to live—and, by God, we gonna fight—we gonna live—*we gonna*—BY GOD![4]

The technique of the playwright-preacher in attacking war will prove helpful to the preacher who is in danger of talking the peace movement to death. Maxwell Anderson and Lawrence Stallings, in "What Price Glory," and R. C. Sheriff, in "Journey's End," rely upon realism. The awful facts prove to be more powerful than logic, though Katrina Trask's "In the Vanguard" is an argument calculated to convince a jury of logicians. It was left for Channing Pollock to turn our minds inside out and force us to see ourselves as the enemy, since the scene is laid in Vienna and the characters when referring to "the enemy" refer to us. "The Enemy" is a psychological mirror and the image revealed is repulsive indeed.

[4] Reprinted by permission of the author.

Think for a moment of that scene in a front line dug-out portrayed in "What Price Glory." A little fellow, an artist, caught the awful enthusiasm of the war days and, flung at last overseas, has lost his identification disc. He stands in fear before the rough Captain Flagg. Flagg is immoral, profane, beastly, but withal a first-rate fighting man. Lewisohn tells him he has lost his identification disc. Flagg bursts forth in boisterous laughter and vulgar reply. Then, noting the suffering upon the boy's face, gives the boy his own identification tag, saying that he guesses he can remember who Flagg is. Finally Lewisohn is in the front line, akin to that described in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front.* Flagg is in the dugout. Red Cross men carry a broken figure down the steps. We hear the voice of Lewisohn crying: "Oh, Captain Flagg, stop the blood. Oh, Captain Flagg, can't you please, sir, stop the blood?" And this rough soldier, with the tenderness of a mother and tears streaming down his face, takes the little fellow into his arms, places him upon a blanket, and cares for him. But Flagg cannot stop the blood. He knows that there must be something wrong with a world that drenches "civilization" in the blood of youth every generation, and the churchman knows that there was blood enough shed upon Calvary long since to redeem mankind from this dread curse.

"Journey's End" is equally compelling. Here,

again, we are at the front. A British officer, schoolmaster and gentleman, is ordered to lead a raiding party across No Man's Land to the German trenches to bring back a prisoner so that the staff may know what regiments had been brought to the front. It is a clear case of suicide. We have become acquainted with this officer. He is a married man who loves his home and his garden:

"I made a rockery when I was home on leave. I used to cycle out to the woods and get primroses and things like that, and try and get 'em to grow in my garden."

We have pictured him in that garden with his lovely wife. The hour is at hand when he must lead the raiding party forward. As he stands beside that table in the dugout, he takes from his third finger a ring, no doubt placed there by the loved one in Britain whom he may not see again. There is a letter he takes from his pocket and throws upon the table. His watch is placed beside it. No mock-heroics—he does not ask for sympathy. He turns to his superior officer and remarks, "I say, don't think I'm being morbid, or anything like that, but would you mind taking these? It's only just in case— If anything should happen, would you send these along to my wife?"

He goes out, and it is journey's end for him. He does not return. A few hours later, the Germans launch a terrific attack. Everyone leaves the dugout. It is journey's end.

In "The Enemy" Channing Pollock's splendid bit of artistry lays the scene in Vienna, so that the enemy, instead of being the German, the Austrian, the Turk, is the French, the English, the American. Preachers may well ponder both the technique and the message of the closing lines of the third act. Carl is an Austrian boy who would be a playwright. He and Jan, his friend, are caught in the maelstrom of war. They enlist. Before going away Carl is married to Pauli. In the third act news is brought to the home that Carl is to return. Pauli dresses in the beautiful gray silk which she wore when she was married. Carl has been at the front for many weary months. He has never beheld the little babe born in his absence. Jan returns; Carl does not. We learn immediately that Carl has been killed. At that moment, Pauli enters the room, beholds Jan, and assumes that Carl is there. But, not seeing him, she says: "Oh, I know Carl's jokes! He's hiding! Carl! I want to see you!"

Her father interrupts her, saying, "He's been detained. He's been hurt. He's been . . ."

Pauli cries, "Killed," and turns upon Jan saying, "Jan! What's happened? If you think you're doing me a kindness . . . ! ! JAN!!!"

Jan answers, "He's dead."

Pauli, dazed, questions pitifully: "How? . . . He was coming home."

And Jan tells us of the homecoming: "It was a long trench. And night. And raining. Part

of the trench was covered. We was coming back from the first line. The whole company. Miles. Black. We got lost. Miles . . . bent double . . . in the dark . . . and mud . . . and we was tired . . . and we kept taking the wrong way. Outside it was hell. Big guns. I said, 'I can't go on,' and the Captain put his hand on my shoulder . . . and I could hear his wrist watch ticking. And I dropped back . . . a little. And then . . . I don't know what happened. A mine . . . maybe . . . or a shell. Right ahead everything went to pieces. Up in the air. In a big flame. Men, too. One man I saw with his head off. There was another one with his guts hanging . . . I don't know. It was hell. Like day . . . with the guns . . . and the rockets . . . and the shells. And behind us the trench was caved in, and we couldn't go back. We fell down on our faces, and dug into the mud. And it rained water, and bullets, and shrapnel. Next to me a man was shot in the throat. And in front of us . . . almost near enough to touch . . . was the men who'd been blown up. And the bullets chugging into their bodies. . . . Tearing open their bloody faces. Hours. Like that. In the mud, and blood, and water. You couldn't reach 'em. Nobody could reach 'em. One man *wasn't* dead. . . ."

Outside we hear the steady tread of marching feet. They are calling up the high-school boys to the front. Heretofore the baby has wakened when the bugles blow and the drums beat and

Pauli turns to her friend Mizzi, saying, "Go in to the baby. He'll waken." She seems out of her mind now and murmurs, "He was coming home." She hears the marching of the soldiers and moans, "More troops."

Mizzi, who has gone in to see the baby, cries: "Pauli!"

But Pauli does not turn. She simply says, "My baby's dead. . . . The drums didn't wake him. He's cold. Don't go in. I know. My baby's dead! . . . Listen! More troops! More! Always more! Where do they come from? From the ends of the earth! From the beginning of history . . . to the end of time! Marching! Babies still unborn . . . their mothers still unborn . . . marching!" A bugle blows assembly. A sudden change comes over Pauli. She stands triumphant and speaks very quietly: "Not *my* baby! *He* won't answer your trumpets! He'll never feel mud, and agony, and the bullets tearing up his face! I've nothing more to feed your guns! My baby's safe! My baby's dead! Thank God! *Thank God!* THANK GOD!"

Scores of playwrights might be mentioned. Galsworthy and Shaw and Barrie and O'Neill are preaching. Ibsen is a preacher, at first despised and rejected. His "Ghosts" is a play that re-enunciates the ancient Bible doctrine that the sins of the father are visited to the third and fourth generations. We see that, while a soul may be transformed at an altar, cleansing is not

complete. The heart may be cleansed, but the bloodstream is polluted. It becomes imperative that, through the method of religious education, the child be kept clean rather than allowed to go forth and through social sinning become diseased and thereby poison the stream of heredity for generations to come. It is a pitiful scene indeed when Oswald realizes that the sinning of his father has brought doom upon him. A physician has told him that some day his mind will go in a flash of time. Oswald talks to his mother. His mother has borne much suffering. For respectability's sake and the sake of her child, she lived with her husband until his death. She hoped that Oswald would never know of his father's sins. But Oswald informs her that he knows full well the life his father lived and the punishment that he himself must pay. He begs his mother to give him poison if it be his mind leaves him. They talk through the night. It is morning. The sun is rising in the east. Oswald looks through an eastern window. Suddenly the dreadful hour comes. Like a tiny child he cries to his mother, "Mother, give me the sun." The ghosts of yesterday's fathers haunt the lives of to-day's sons!

Ibsen tells us too that anyone who would carry out the ideals of these playwright-preachers may look forward to a time when he will be persecuted for righteousness' sake and be called "An Enemy of the People." Doctor Stockman, in this remarkable play, becomes "an enemy of the

people." He lives in a little town that depends upon numerous visitors to its hot springs for support. People have come from far and wide to bathe and receive medicinal benefit. But there is much sickness in the town. Stockman learns that the water is polluted. He, as health officer, proves this to be the case. He believes the town will cleanse the springs and honor him. But he has attacked certain vested interests, and changes are "too" costly. A subtle attack is launched upon him, and before long a saviour of the people has been dubbed an enemy. Stockman is stoned at a meeting called to consider the matter. He, sure that the public will respond to fact and regarding the meeting as a great event in his life, dresses in his best clothes. His trousers are cut by one of the stones, and Ibsen has Doctor Stockman declare, "You should never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth." Stockman realizes that he must begin with younger life, and remarks, "I must have at least twelve boys to begin with." Where did he get the idea of twelve? The play climaxes with the mighty statement of the enemy of the people, "I have made a great discovery. . . . It is this, let me tell you—that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone."

The playwright is preaching, and ordained "men of the cloth" may profitably study his technique to the end that sermons may be more powerful, life transformed, and society redeemed.

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